

Let's READ FOR FUN



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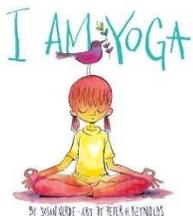
November... the dreaded month of time change, leafless trees and gray rainy days. How will we survive until the snow adds light to our lives? We can always hibernate like groundhogs, but let's try a cheerier strategy this year. Indeed, November is the perfect time to pull on your comfy clothes, light your candles and savour a sweet hot chocolate – all inspired by the Danish concept *hygge* (see article below) aimed at creating a soothing atmosphere in your home (where we all are these days!) and promote well-being. Needless to say – and you can guess where I'm going with this – November is also the perfect opportunity to dive into some great books with your children – books that make you laugh, bring comfort, or boost your energy level!

So here are some reading suggestions to add life and light to those mornings that are slow to get off the ground, those cold, drizzly afternoons, and those evenings when energy levels are waning. Ideal conditions for sharing the joys of a good book!

Our tips for good reads and activities

We may have put away our bikes until spring, but it's important to stay active to preserve our mental health. Here are a few suggestions to integrate some gentle movement into your lives, to help keep you supple and maintain your inner calm:

First, some stretching:



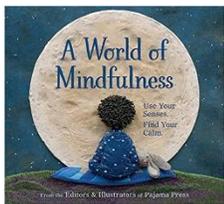
I Am Yoga, by Susan Verde and Peter H. Reynolds, Abrams Appleseed, 2017 (ages 2+)

Start your children's day (and yours!) with some or all of these 16 simple yoga poses – a sure way to lower everyone's tension level and have fun as a family. Also helps calm the before-supper craziness, or slow things down as bedtime draws near.

Take a moment to talk about the muscles you are keeping flexible, and the elements of nature the author links with the poses. This book is great for school-aged children as well.

- ♥ For a fun musical demonstration, check out this [video](#) – you can join in too!
- ♥ The beautiful watercolour illustrations in this book might inspire you to get out the paint pots – even little ones enjoy swirling paint on paper! Display your pictures on the wall to remind you to keep yoga in your daily routine.

Next, a focus on the senses:



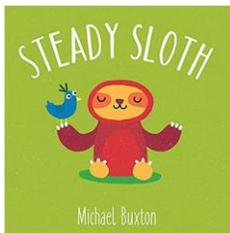
A World of Mindfulness, Pajama Press, 2020 (ages 3+)

A sensory exploration of the world and the things that bring us pleasure: the smells and sounds of nature and the emotions they evoke, the textures and tastes we experience throughout the day... The illustrations by 15 different artists will give you ample material to put shared reading into practice, and the brief text lends itself to conversations about feelings and how to handle them.

Look at the cover with your children. Talk about what the book might be about. As you read, ask your children to imagine themselves doing what these children are doing. How does it make them feel? Close your eyes and listen. What sounds do you hear? Talk about things that have made you angry, sad, happy, proud. When have you been scared? Talk about the senses (smell, touch, hearing, sight, taste).

- ♥ Watch the [Whale Breath Singalong](#) video and teach your children this calming belly breathing technique!
- ♥ Plant some bulbs so flowers bloom in your home: [Indoor gardening projects](#) (Vancouver Sun article)
- ♥ Have your children make some grass-haired monsters: find out how [here](#) (How to Teach Basics of Gardening to Kids); for a more elaborate version, scroll through this [article](#) (Make Your Own Grass Heads).
- ♥ And see below for more gardening ideas...
- ♥ Blow bubbles in the bathtub, do some artwork with paint or playdough, have an indoor picnic with your favourite foods, play tag in the park...

Sometimes best to take it slow:



Steady Sloth, by Michael Buxton, Kane Miller, 2019 (ages 0 to 3)

With the weather less conducive to outdoor play, let's use Steady Sloth as our guide to slow living! No need to rush – building, knitting, baking and gardening can all be done slowly. You can even read the book slowly!

How do the cats differ? Find a cat with a blue or green collar. How does their expressions change when they've finished building? Get out your building blocks and get creative! Use the couch cushions to make a hu-u-u-ge castle!

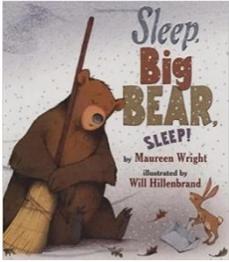
Count the meerkats; which balls of yarn are the same or different? Knit a scarf for your child – or “yarn bomb” the tree in front of your home!

The snake chose the layer cake. Which one would you choose? What do you need to make a cake? If you have the ingredients, whip one up! Let the little hands in your home stir the batter and decorate the result.

November may not be the best month for a garden, but why not a pot of basil on the windowsill? What tools do you use for gardening? Don't hesitate to add more information: bees gather pollen from flowers so they can make honey; butterflies don't look like bees, but they can fly too - they both have wings. What about airplanes? (Check out the gardening ideas suggested above as well.)

- ♥ Watch this [video](#) to try out another breathing exercise, hear the book read aloud, and join in a song with voice and ASL!

Of course, hibernation is an option for some:



Sleep Big Bear Sleep, by Maureen Wright and Will Hillenbrand, Amazon Publishing, 2009 ([ages 3 to 7](#))

This one is not recent but it's just too good to miss! Because Big Bear has trouble hearing what the winter wind is saying, he's off on other missions when he should be sleeping. The rhyming text is perfect for reading aloud and developing phonological awareness (understanding that letters have sounds that are used to make words). Most importantly, it's just a fun, fun story!

If you can't manage to get your hands on a copy of the book, you can join in a read aloud [here](#) (ignore the comment about selective hearing at the end however 😊)

This [Choose To Read Ohio document](#) is a treasure trove of ideas to exploit and expand on all this book has to offer. Pick and choose according to your child's interests and level of understanding.

You can also use this book as a starting point and then find out more about hibernation: Which animals hibernate? Where do they hibernate? How do they survive all winter? Which animals migrate? Where do they go?

Additional reads about hibernation:

- ♥ **Time to Sleep**, by Denise Fleming, Square Fish, 2001 – *one by one, all the hibernators get the message that it's time to sleep...*
- ♥ **Shh! Bears Sleeping**, by David Martin, Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher, Penguin, 2017 – *a gentle poem that follows a family of bears through the seasons*
- ♥ **Sleep, Bear!**, National Geographic, 2015 – *a real-life look at hibernation*
- ♥ [Watch the heartwarming song and video by Benjamin Scheuer: **Come Hibernate With Me**](#). It's also a beautiful book!

Some extra reading suggestions to get you moving, manage your emotions and explore the meaning of home:

- ♥ **Sometimes I Like to Curl up in a Ball**, by Vicki Churchill and Charles Fuge, Sterling Publishing, 2001 – *feels great to let the emotions out!*
- ♥ **Sing**, by Joe Raposo and Tom Lichtenheld, Henry Holt, 2013 – *an upbeat song for the musically inclined*
- ♥ **Hilda Must Be Dancing**, by Karma Wilson and Suzann Watts, Aladdin, 2004 – *rollicking, rhyming fun!*
- ♥ **Grumpy Bird**, by Jeremy Tankard, Scholastic, 2007 – *sometimes a walk is the perfect antidote to grumpiness*
- ♥ **No Place Like Home**, by Johnathan Emmett and Vanessa Cabban, Candlewick Press, 2004 – *you can always look for better, but sometimes where you are is the best place to be.*
- ♥ **Ice Cream Store**, by Dennis Lee and David McPhail, HarperCollins, 1991 – *short and catchy poems that will easily have you laughing – there's no best-before date for that!*
- ♥ **Cat in the Hat**, by Dr. Seuss, Random House, 1957 – *not your typical dull day at home!*
- ♥ **Bears We Know**, by Brenda Silsbe and Vlasta van Kampen, Annick Press, 2009 – *these bears have mastered the art of making their home a comfy haven!*
- ♥ **You're Here for a Reason**, by Nancy Tillman, Feiwel and Friends, 2015 – *a feel-good read with gorgeous illustrations*

- ♥ **Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day**, by Judith Viorst and Ray Cruz, Athenium, 1972 – *some days are disasters from start to finish, but tomorrow may be sunnier!*

Where to find these books and so many more?

Just let us know – **we'd love to send you a box of books!** If the libraries in your area are still open, you can also plan a family outing. If restrictions are in effect, you can reserve your books online and pick them up contact-free, or borrow digital books. If you're already planning your holiday purchases, visit the [independent booksellers site](#) to locate a bookstore near you, then shop in person or online on the bookstore's site. You can sort titles by genre or by age group to find the perfect book.

Note that the [Fondation des Sourds is offering financial assistance to parents of children living with a hearing loss to help them purchase books](#). Visit their [site](#) (in French only) to check the criteria for eligibility and fill out an application for funding.

What is the *Read for Fun* team reading this month?

- ♥ *I'll Keep You Safe*, Peter May, Quercus, 2018
- ♥ *The Stars Are Fire*, Anita Shreve, Akfred A. Knopf, 2017

Do you have any good books to recommend to other parents, reading models for their children like you?

More for parents...

- ♥ [We all need a little hygge](#) (CHEK News article)
- ♥ [Tips for reading](#) with your deaf or hard of hearing child (Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority)
- ♥ **First Nations Book Fair**, 25 to 29 November 2020, an entirely digital event this year! Consult the [press release](#) and the [event programme](#) (English activities are in blue).

And for kids too!

- ♥ Talk the [What's my mask face? Quiz!](#) Can you tell how someone is feeling if you can only see their eyes?

Did you know that...

[Handwriting activates the brain more than using a keyboard.](#)¹

A recent study revealed that the areas of the brain most involved in memory and storing new information are activated to a greater degree when students write by hand than when they type on a keyboard, thus creating conditions in the brain that are more conducive to learning.

¹Source: [The importance of cursive handwriting over typewriting for learning in the classroom](#), *Frontiers in Psychology*

Just saying...

Although currently under lockdown, Belgium is keeping its bookstores open, since books are considered an "essential need". We can't agree more!

What about you...?

How are you managing?

Do you have more time or less time to read?

Have you been able to visit your neighbourhood library?

Have you tried borrowing and reading digital books with your children?

♥ Tell us about your adventures in reading over the past few months. Your ideas may be a source of inspiration for other families!

Do your children have a favourite book?

♥ Tell us what they think about it so others can discover it too.

Do you have any questions for us?

♥ Let us know what we can do to help you.

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