

Baby Steps with Baby Books

A Parent's Guide to Reading and Sharing Karen Katz's Books



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Books by karen katz

Karen Katz's baby books introduce your infant or toddler to the joys of reading through colorful illustrations and engaging, age-appropriate text. Her lift-the-flap books, sturdy board books, and cloth book delight the youngest of readers with titles that address baby's favorite subjects: loved ones, toys, peekaboo games, and other babies!

The tips and activities in this guide are meant to enhance the reading experience you share with your little one. There are four categorical distinctions—Baby Step 1 to Baby Step 4—based on typical developmental stages. These stages do not necessarily correspond with the age of your child, but rather where your child is developmentally. Use the Sharing Tips to help engage your child during reading time and the Activities to focus on more specific learning goals.

About Karen Katz

Photo by Gary Richards



Karen Katz has always made art—posters, quilts, costumes, prints, sculpture, painting, collage, book illustration, and design. After graduating from the Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia she attended the Yale Graduate School of Art and Architecture, where she became interested in folk art, Indian miniatures, Shaker art, and Mexican art. She began doing folk sculpture and working with fabrics. Karen is influenced by Chagall and Matisse as well as folk art. She has written and illustrated more than forty novelty and picture books, including her bestselling *Where Is Baby's Belly Button?* Her book *Counting Kisses* was a Children's Book-of-the-Month Club Main Selection and an Oppenheim Toy Portfolio Gold Seal Award Winner. Karen, her husband and their daughter divide their time between New York City and Saugerties, New York. See the last page of this guide for a listing of all the Karen Katz books available from Little Simon.



Baby Step 1: Exploring the Basics

SHARING TIPS

Make It Routine

Incorporate reading into your bedtime routine. For instance, after a bath and before a bottle or that last cup of water, settle into a comfy spot and read a book together. Soon your baby will learn to expect and anticipate the reading experience.

Sit in Front

Try putting your child in front of you rather than in your lap when reading. This way your baby can focus on your face as well as the book. Your child will soon make the connection that you are reading from the book.

Turn the Page

Introduce your baby to the basic concepts of reading a book. Show your baby how you open the book to the first page before reading. Say “Open the book,” as you do so. Model how you turn the pages of the book from right to left. Say “Turn the page” every time you do so. When you have finished reading the book, say “All done.” Soon your child will know how to open the book, turn the pages, and close the book all by himself.

Lift the Flap

When reading a lift-the-flap book, encourage your child to lift the flaps. In the beginning, place your thumb under the flap to call your child’s attention to it. Then allow your child to lift each flap on his or her own to discover a fun surprise.

Play Peekaboo

Say “peekaboo” each time you lift a flap.



Baby Step 1: Exploring the Basics

ACTIVITIES

Texture Sensations

At this stage in development, your baby is very interested in textures and exploring objects with both hands and mouth. Let your baby fully explore the book you are reading together. Introduce a cloth book like *Baby's Day* to your child. The soft pages and crinkly textures will encourage your baby to play and interact with the book.

The Nose Knows

Your child is interested in learning the names of things, such as the parts of the body. Read a story together, like *Where Is Baby's Belly Button?*, and begin to help your child identify his or her own body parts. For example, point to your nose and say “nose,” and then point to your child's nose and say “nose.” You can also point to the baby's nose in the picture. Keep it simple. Beginning a conversation about a nose, what it does, and how it works, is too advanced.

Try to focus on one body part per week. Throughout that week, call attention to your nose or your baby's nose during everyday activities. Then focus on another body part the next week. Don't forget to review your child's understanding of “nose” from time to time.

A Hat Is a Hat

While reading a book together, have ready a few of the objects mentioned in the book. For instance, in *Peek-a-Baby*, a ball, hat, and teddy bear are mentioned. When you read a page that discusses the ball, show a real ball to your baby. Help your child make the connection between the written word and picture and a real object.

Look at the Sound I Make

Help your child practice consonant and vowel sounds and emerging words with the following activity. While reading a book with simple sounds like *ba-ba* and *ma-ma*, as in *What Does Baby Say?*, direct your child's attention to your mouth. For example, place your index finger on closed lips when you make the *m* sound in *ma-ma*. Draw an imaginary circle around your mouth when you say the *oh* in *uh-oh*. Lightly touch your lips when you make the *b* sound in *ba-ba*. You want your child to watch how you make the sound first and then to make it himself. Using hand-over-hand assistance, help your child make the same finger motions when making the various sounds.

Using Gestures

Incorporate gestures into your read-aloud experience. You may use Standard American Sign Language or popular “baby signing” methods, or make up your own signs. It is especially helpful to seat your baby in front of you, so your baby can see your face and gestures while you read. For example, when reading a book such as *What Does Baby Say?*, place your hands against your cheeks when you say “uh-oh,” or use your hands to indicate crying eyes when you say “waah-waah.” Your child will learn a way of communicating to you during the time that verbal communication is emerging.

Baby Step 2: Discovering and Understanding

SHARING TIPS

Provide a Choice

As your baby becomes more familiar with the Karen Katz books, begin to offer a choice of which book to read. Hold out two books and say, “Which book do you want?” Then read the book your child has indicated.

Lift the Smaller Flaps

Continue to help your child improve fine motor skills with more lift-the-flap books like those in the *Baby’s Box of Family Fun* set, including *Daddy and Me* and *Where Is Baby’s Mommy?* These books have smaller flaps requiring greater hand-eye coordination and dexterity.

Ask Simple Questions

While reading books together, ask simple questions about what you see on the page. Many of the Karen Katz books already have questions built into them, such as “Where is Grandpa’s favorite spoon?” in *Grandpa and Me*, that encourage readers to lift the flap to find the answers. Ask your child other questions to monitor understanding, such as “Where is Grandpa?” and “What is this?” when pointing to pictures of objects your child knows.

Read It Again

What if your child wants you to read the same story for the millionth time? Great! Your child is showing you an interest in a book and building an important connection to literacy. At this stage in development, you want to develop your child’s ability to use his or her prior knowledge or understanding of the story to focus on other aspects of the book, including sound and word recognition. Don’t be afraid to read the story again and again to develop other skills.



Baby Step 2: Discovering and Understanding

ACTIVITIES

Family Flash Cards

Read a book to your child about family members, such as *Grandma and Me*. Afterward, show photographs of immediate family members and extended relatives to your child. Name the people in each picture. Make copies of the photographs and paste each person's picture on a single index card. Below the picture write the person's name. Have fun looking through the cards with your child. In addition, you may arrange the cards in order by family relationships, age, or alphabetized names.

Free to Explore

Allow your child to explore and discover the surprises in any of the lift-the-flap books on his or her own. Then encourage the same curiosity and motivation to learn by putting together a mystery box. Gather a few toys your child hasn't played with in a while as well as a few safe household items, such as a wooden spoon or a lightweight measuring cup. Place the items in a cardboard box and close it. Allow your child to find and open it to discover what's inside. Repeat the activity with new items. You may also use a smaller box, and then hide it somewhere in the room to encourage further discovery.

Little Labels

As you are reading together, point to the objects in the pictures and label them for your child. Say the name of each object slowly and clearly. Make sure to focus on only a few objects during each reading. Then use the same idea in your home by creating little labels. Write the word *table* on an index card and tape the card to a table. Write the word *chair* on a card and tape it to a chair. Start with only a few labels and then slowly increase the number. Remember to read the label aloud each time you and your child use the object.



Baby Step 3: Reading and Discussing Together

SHARING TIPS

It's Your Book

While you read together, have your child hold the book and be in control of turning pages and lifting flaps. Make your child feel as if he or she is reading independently. Demonstrate an idea of the reading pace by following the words with your finger as you read. You might also guide your child's finger along the words as you read together.

You Read to Me

Encourage your child to read the book to you. Although your child will be pretending to read, he or she will have the chance to practice the motions of reading and solidify the understanding and importance of the printed word.

Wonder Aloud

Periodically while reading together, make statements such as "I wonder what will happen next?" or "This is a funny story." Reveal to your child what goes on in a reader's head while reading a new story. This will familiarize your child with the processes of making predictions and forming evaluations while reading.



Baby Step 3: Reading and Discussing Together

ACTIVITIES

A Happy Holiday

Preparing for holidays is an excellent way for your child to learn your family traditions. Read a book about the holiday, such as *Where Is Baby's Pumpkin?* or *Where Is Baby's Dreidel?*, during the month in which the holiday occurs. Show your child the day of the holiday on a calendar. Cross the days off as you get closer and closer to the holiday. Show your child the decorations or clothes associated with the celebration. Prepare a special food your family enjoys at this time. Give your child nontoxic clay or dough to pretend to make such foods along with you. Involve other family members in the preparations and celebrations.

Potty Time

Potty training can be difficult for any child, and it may take some time before he or she understands it. Talking about potty training before starting the process can ease some of the confusion and anxiety. Read a book such as *A Potty for Me!* together to introduce the subject. Make supportive statements while reading the book, such as, "Look at that baby using the potty!" or "Wow! That baby went potty all by himself." Read the book through several times to familiarize your little one with the potty training process.

Fun Flaps

Help your child create a lift-the-flap book. Fold a few sheets of paper together horizontally. Staple the inside crease. Staple an extra sheet of paper to every right-hand page in order to create the flaps. Help your child draw a picture of a simple object, such as a ball or a toy car, to appear underneath each flap. You may also cut pictures out of magazines and glue them to these pages. Write the name of the object on the flap or on the left-hand page. Encourage your child to create designs or scribbles in the book. Have fun lifting your homemade flaps.



Baby Step 4: Explore the Parts of a Story

SHARING TIPS

It's Time to Rhyme

While reading a book together, pause after reading simple words, such as *at*, *my*, or *can*. Help your child identify words that rhyme with the simple words, such as *hat*, *mat*, *sat*, and *cat* for *at*. Together make up a silly rhyme using all the words you identified.

Clap Together

Introduce your child to syllables while reading. Say, "Let's listen to the beats while we read. Let's clap on the beats." Model clapping out the syllables in a word you have read. Then model clapping out the syllables in a sentence. In each instance, have your child repeat after you.

Name the Letter

Choose a letter to focus on before you begin reading. For example, say "Let's look for all the *m* letters." Then, after reading a page, pause and ask your child to point to any *m*'s on the page. The next time you read together, choose a different letter and repeat the activity.

Retell the Story to Me

After reading a narrative together, such as *Where Is Baby's Mommy?*, ask your child to retell the story to you. Help your child understand and recall the beginning, middle, and end of the story. If your child is having difficulty, review a few of the pages from the book.

Look at the Cover

Before reading a new book, take some time to study its cover. Read the title to your child and ask what he or she thinks the story will be about. After reading, remind your child of this prediction. Discuss whether or not the prediction was correct.



Baby Step 4: Explore the Parts of a Story

ACTIVITIES

Stamp Your Feet

Playing simple games during reading can help engage your child in the learning experience. Read a book about body parts, such as *Wiggle Your Toes* or *Toes, Ears, & Nose!* Encourage your child to manipulate all of the flaps, movable parts, and textures. Pause after each page and have your child get moving! Say, “Stamp your feet” or “Flap your arms.” By doing so, you’re reviewing body parts but also teaching your child to listen carefully and follow directions. Afterward sing the song “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes” with your child.

Count with Me

While counting books, such as *Counting Kisses*, can be shared with your child at any stage in development, your child may benefit most from counting and mathematical exercises at the age of three or four. Before this time, your child will probably know the words related to numbers, but may not understand a word’s relationship to the quantity of objects. Read a counting book together, such as *Daddy Hugs* or *Mommy Hugs*, and count objects in the pictures or patterns together. Point to the numbers on the pages and have your child trace the numbers with an index finger. Once your child is comfortable with counting, encourage him or her to count objects in your home or objects that you see while taking a drive in the car.

And Then What Happens?

Read a narrative book together, like *Where Is Baby’s Valentine?* or *Grandma and Me*. After the story has ended, ask your child what would happen next in the story. Encourage your child to be creative when thinking about this next event or part to the story. Help your child write down his or her ideas on a sheet of paper and draw pictures to go along with this new part of the story. The next time you read the book together, read this new chapter as well.

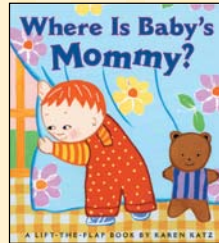
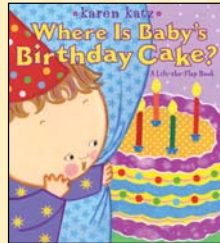
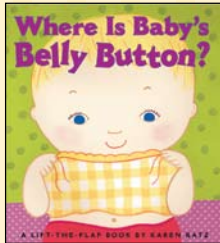
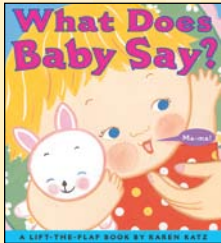
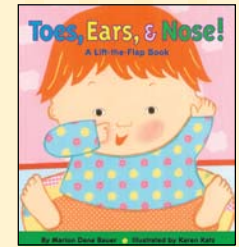
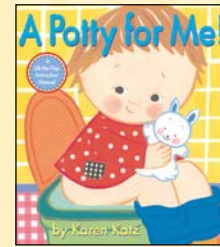
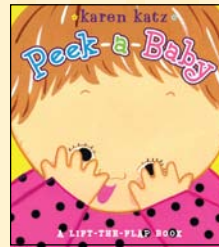
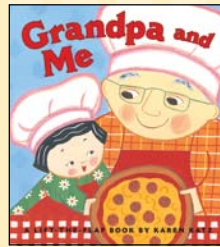
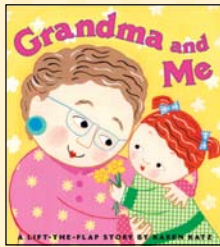
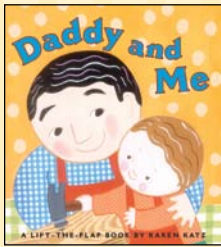
Thank you for using this guide. We hope it helps make reading time with your little one a daily routine and that you’ll continue to choose the perfect book for your baby from the sweet selection of Karen Katz titles published by Little Simon.

**Sincerely,
Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing**



Read All of the Karen Katz Books from Little Simon!

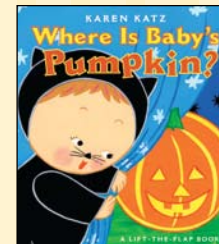
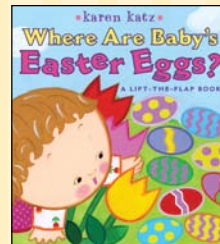
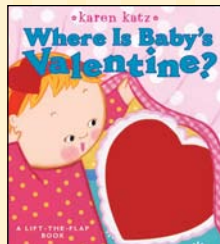
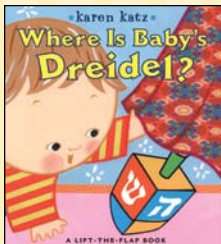
LIFT-THE-FLAP BOARD BOOKS



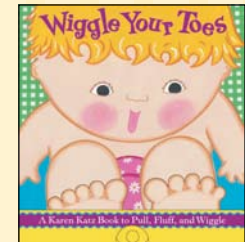
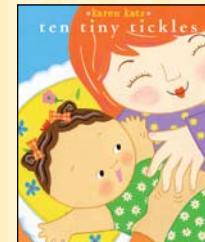
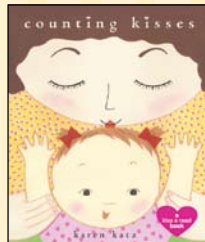
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Written by
Marion Dane Bauer

HOLIDAY-THEMED LIFT-THE-FLAP BOARD BOOKS

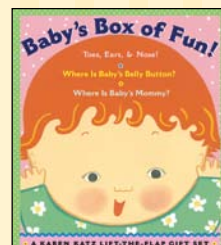


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MISCELLANEOUS FORMATS



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