By age three, a child has developed good language skills and a better sense of self. She has an active imagination and talks to herself as she plays and acts out dramas. She enjoys and needs language play. She understands simple basic concepts and engages in critical-thinking skills. Expand her world with a good selection of books.

Tips for selecting books for 3 or 4-year-olds

• A child is learning to treat books with respect, and he is ready to handle and care for hardcover picture books with paper pages.

• Picture books are the best type of book for preschool children. In these books, there is a balance between words and pictures. The illustrations tell as much about the story as the printed words. The illustrations help pre-reading children “read” the action even if they can’t read the words yet.

• Choose books with large print and few words that can be read in one sitting.

• Choose books that tell a predictable story, use the same language patterns throughout, and have a definite ending.

• Children love rhymes, word play, and silly stories like those found in Mother Goose and nursery rhymes. Sing and move to the rhythms and rhymes of these familiar favorites.

• Invite children to learn more about the world through books with realistic pictures about everyday life.

• Children will also delight in stories where animals have human characteristics and are involved in human situations. The preschooler likes humor and can differentiate between actions that are real and those that are not.

• A three or four-year-old enjoys learning facts that are presented in an interesting way. For example, read a story about a fire dog that includes realistic facts about firefighters.
• Wordless story books will allow a child to interpret the story through the pictures and tell it in her own words.

• Make available a variety of books on various subjects – animals, careers, families, etc.

• When choosing story books for children, always choose good literature. Select books that have illustrations that fit the story and language that is a pleasure to read.

• Introduce some factual books like simple first dictionaries and reference books.