

Opening Keynote Address

Mem Fox's Ten Read Aloud Commandments

1. Spend at least ten wildly happy minutes *every single day* reading aloud.
2. Read at least three stories a day: it may be the same story three times. Children need to hear a thousand stories before they can begin to learn to read.
3. Read aloud with animation. Listen to your own voice and don't be dull, or flat, or boring. Hang loose and be loud, have loads of fun and laugh a lot.
4. Read with joy and enjoyment: real enjoyment for yourself and great joy for the listeners.
5. Read the stories that the kids love, over and over and over again, and always read in the same 'tune' for each book using the same intonations on each page, each time.
6. Let children hear lots of language by talking to them constantly about the pictures, or anything else connected to the book; or sing any old song that you can remember; or say nursery rhymes in a bouncy way; or be noisy together doing clapping games.
7. Look for rhyme, rhythm or repetition in books for young children, and make sure the books are really short.
8. Play games with the things that you and the child can see on the page, such as letting kids finish rhymes, and finding the letters in the child's name and yours, remembering that it's never work, it's always a fabulous game.
9. Never ever *teach* reading, or get tense around books.
10. Read aloud every day because you just love being with your child, not because it's the right thing to do. This is as important for fathers as it is for mothers!

For a lively, 'live' lesson in how to read aloud go to <www.memfox.net>

'Healthy Solutions for Children: Making the Right Choice'

10th National Conference for the Association for the Welfare of Child Health

28, 29 April 2005

Carlton Hotel Parramatta, Sydney

The Mem Fox list of must-have classics for Aussie kids aged 0-4 (in no order at all!)

1. *I Went Walking* by Sue Machin
2. *Each Peach Pear Plum* by Allan Ahlberg
3. *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* by Bill Martin Jr
4. *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr Seuss
5. *The Foot Book* by Dr Seuss
6. *Are You My Mother?* by PD Eastman
7. *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak
8. *Where's Spot?* by Eric Hill
9. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle
10. *The Bunyip of Berkeley's Creek* by Jenny Wagner
11. *Owl Babies* by Martin Waddell
12. *Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy* by Lynley Dodd
13. *Rascal The Dragon* by Paul Jennings
14. *Madeline* by Ludwig Bemelmans
15. *Wombat Stew* by Marcia K. Vaughan
16. *Who Sank The Boat?* by Pamela Allen
17. *Dr Seuss's ABC* by Dr Seuss
18. *Dear Zoo* by Rod Campbell
19. *Rosie's Walk* by Pat Hutchins
20. *Hand Hand Finger Thumb* by Al Perkins

At least five hundred other books could have been on this list, of course.

And—if I may be so bold!—from my own pen, children appear to enjoy the following in particular:

Boo to a Goose, Time for Bed, Where Is The Green Sheep?, Hattie and the Fox, Tough Boris, Shoes from Grandpa, Possum Magic, Koala Lou, Wombat Divine, Sleepy Bears, The Magic Hat, Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge and Hunwick's Egg.
