

As the days grow cooler and shorter, I find myself trying to get as cozy as possible at home. The throw blankets are out, battery-powered candles lit, and I have plans to get an apple pie in the oven this weekend. My kitchen never feels more like home than when it smells like baking apples or my husband's bubbling chili.

Wherever you live, I hope you, too, can find small everyday comforts in your home. Whether it's a wall of family photos, an heirloom quilt, or a funky lamp, we all have things that make our residences feel like home. Books already may be one of those things, but if you need some more, the library has them for you for free! Here are some of my favorite children's books about houses that will be sure to increase the coziness level in your home.

"The Farmhouse" is a gorgeous and fascinating picture book from Caldecott Medal-winning author and illustrator Sophie Blackall. After buying a piece of property with a falling-down farmhouse on it, Blackall imagined the lives of the family of 14 who lived there years ago. She explored the house and found bits of papers, fabric, and other common items that told their story, and used those scraps to help create the illustrations in the book. The result is a feast for the eyes and a sweet story for the soul.

"A House," by Kevin Henkes, another Caldecott Medal winner, is a much simpler take on a house for young children. The pictures show a simple white house in the rain, under a sun, at night, and buried in snow. The text encourages discussion of the illustrations by asking questions about them, making this picture book perfect for shared reading with a very young child.

"The Blue House," by Phoebe Wahl, is about what makes a house a home, and how difficult it can be when you have to leave it. Leo and his dad are very sad to have to leave their house, a place where the paint was peeling and the roof was mossy, and where they danced and baked pies and built blanket forts. The illustrations of their home are so charming and full of lovely details that you'll wish you could step right in and join their dance parties. After they move, their new house feels strange and empty at first, but it starts to feel like home as they start creating new memories there.

"Time For Bed, Old House," by Janet Costa Bates and A.G. Ford, is a unique bedtime story. Isaac is spending the night at Grandpop's house for the first time but isn't sleepy at bedtime, so Grandpop has him help put the house to bed. They turn out the lights to make it dark and cozy, close the blinds to close the house's eyes, and read the house a bedtime story. By the end of the story, the house and Grandpop are asleep, and Isaac confidently puts himself to bed, too.

"Building Our House" by Jonathan Bean will be a favorite among kids who love learning how things work. A family moves to the country where they will build a new house in the middle of a weedy field. The book shows the family working hard on every step of construction, from breaking ground to pouring the foundation to having a frame-raising party with everyone they know. The house couldn't have been built without the help of a community and the strength of a determined family.

Reading as a family can be such a snuggly activity on a chilly autumn evening. I hope you find some books to bring warmth to your home!