Ah, bedtime stories. Curled up together reading a book with your little one, it makes you think of quiet snuggles, hushed voices, dimmed lights, turning pages—and dance parties?! We’ve got some dance-themed book suggestions to shake up your storytime and add a little wiggle and some giggles to your reading routine.

Boys take center stage in this rhyming introduction to dance in a studio as well as everyday life.

“Bunheads” by Misty Copeland and Sitor Fiadzigby (2020)
Prima ballerina Misty Copeland, the first Black woman to be promoted to principal dancer at the prestigious American Ballet Theatre, fictionalized her young self, falling in love with dancing through a performance of Coppélia. Fans of Ms. Copeland or classical ballet may also enjoy her book Firebird (2014), illustrated by Christopher Myers.

“How Do You Dance?” by Thyra Heder (2019)
Move a body part, then another, in the park, in a car—before you know it, you’ll be shimmying and scrunching in happy times and sad because everyone’s got their special way of moving and grooving.

“I Will Dance” by Nancy Bo Flood and Juliana Swaney (2020)
A wheelchair user due to her cerebral palsy, Eva finds a studio that welcomes dancers of all abilities and becomes increasingly confident in her movements with the troupe; based on the Young Dance Company.

A bit too much cake makes Llama dance until his pants rip, tearing a hole in the fabric of the very universe in this hilarious picture book that begs to be read aloud—with cake and dancing, of course!

Salsa Lullaby, by Jen Arena and Erika Meza (2019)
Through lively illustrations and rhythmic text, Mami and Papi salsa through a baby’s bedtime routine in this upbeat and affectionate bilingual story.
A pair of magical tap shoes transport a boy to 1930s Harlem where he meets his grandfather
and other legendary Black performers. A theatrical adaptation of this multigenerational chapter
book is pending.

Keep the party going with these activities:

- Stage a family dance challenge and learn new choreography. Try popular older dances
  like the Foxtrot and Reel, or download a square-dancing song with calls and try to follow
  along. Or, hey, let your kids school you on a Tik-Tok challenge and then you’ll really get
  some laughs!

- Enjoy an archived performance from some of the world’s greatest dancers on a
  streaming platform like the New York Ballet on PBS or the Alvin Ailey American Dance
  Theatre at The Kennedy Center.

- Research dance troupes that celebrate your family’s identity, or dancers that represent
  a culture or ethnic heritage other than your own. Examples might include Step Afrika!,
  Hula dancing, Irish step dancing or Japanese Buyô.