



Tips for choosing a good children's book

A basic guide

It's interesting to note that if you love reading and your children see you reading they are quite likely to be eager readers too. That is great if you love reading but what if you don't?

A love of books and reading is important for all of us. Having worked in education for a number of years and worked with an extremely broad range of age groups and people I am aware that reading is not as straight forward as you might think.

Children with dyslexia and adults who pretend to read when they can't ALL deserve the opportunity to be confident and excited when they pick a book, magazine, read a sign or need to carry out a piece of research.

Here we have put together a few tips to help you make some good choices about the vast library of books you may develop at home and access from the community.

'A few encouraging words is all we need to give us the tools to develop our own skills and the skills of those around us.' A M Colman, Author

Or as Dr Seuss puts it.....

'You're NEVER too old, too wacky, too wild, TO PICK UP A BOOK and READ to a CHILD.'

Dr Seuss is a great example of the importance of following our dreams and skills and how those dreams and skills develop when we apply the art of reading and learning. As we grow great book recommendations help us develop our language, promote learning, and extend our written vocabulary.

Fun fact-Theodor **Seuss** Geisel, popularly known as **Dr Seuss**, wasn't a **real doctor**. Instead he used the honorific "**Dr**" in order to appease his father who expected him to study medicine

The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you LISTEN, the more places you will GO. Dr Seuss



Babies

New-born babies can focus about 8 to 12 inches from their face. Did you know they see only black, white and grey? As adults we support babies to develop their memories, curiosity and build on their attention span.

Provide:

- Books in black and white with large shapes and images (such as animals).
- Basic colours and large pictures are a great start.
- General safe books for babies.
- Homemade photo books.

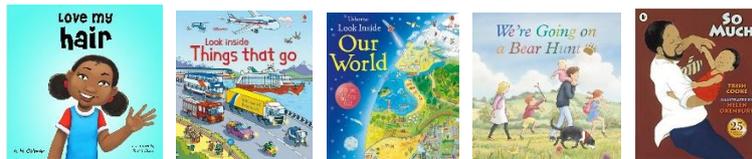


Babies and Toddlers

It is generally believed that babies can see in colour from about 5 months

Provide:

- Cloth and board books as these are practical and durable.
- Books without words to stimulate observation, discussion creativity and story telling.
- Books which have every day objects inside and outside the home.
- Books that reflect diversity (These are harder to find but all children should be able to see themselves and others in books. There are a number of specialised bookstores online).
- Books that rhyme and or have repetition.
- Books with simple text.
- Picture books and bright colours.
- Interactive books (sounds) and Tactile books with the opportunity to point, touch, and talk about the pictures.
- Books which encourage a sense of 'awe and wonder'. E.g. pop up books, science and technology books, moving parts books, pull and push lever books. (Museums has some wonderful pop up books by the way).
- Alphabet and number books. (Some children will be identifying some words)
- Life experience.
- Home made photos books with text.



Pre-school

Provide:

- Books that rhyme and or have repetition. (Dr Seuss for example).
- Books that reflect diversity (These are harder to find but all children should be able to see themselves and others in books. There are a number of specialised bookstores online).
- Dual language books (this might not be something you would consider, but it is a wonderful opportunity to introduce children to languages and different types of text).
- Nursery rhymes, hero, fairy stories and longer stories you read over a few days. (Now, some people have an issue with fairy stories because they believe that they stereotype. If you provide a broad range of books for children this should not be an issue, and of course children's real-life experience will reinforce this).
- Books which reflect real life and everyday experiences.
- Books which teach concepts and principles. (E.g. saying please, potty training, eating fruit and vegetables, new baby, starting school).
- Books which introduce more complex texts and/or effective word repetition.
- Books which encourage a sense of 'awe and wonder'. E.g. pop up books, science and technology books, moving parts books, pull and push lever books. (Museums has some wonderful pop up books by the way).
- Alphabet and number books. (Some children will be identifying some words)
- Life experience.
- Tactile books with the opportunity to point, touch, and talk about the pictures.
- Poetry or nonsense stories are a great.
- Home made photo books with text, numbers and information.



Primary Years (Ages 4-8)

Provide:

- Books with a few words encouraging children to read. This may include phonic books.
- Longer story books to read over a few days.
- Books that reflect diversity (These are harder to find but all children should be able to see themselves and others in books. There are a number of specialised bookstores online).
- Character, comic, hero, adventure, and fun books.
- Books which support a wide range of stages for learning. Supporting children with dyslexia for example to build their confidence and skills.
- Easy reading books. Books which encourage children to read independently. In the early stages these will have pictures to help children identify what is happening in the story or text.
- Books with challenging vocabulary and new interesting words which encourage children to be inquisitive.
- Detailed factual books, topic books and books which grab children's interest.
- Non-fiction educational books, and books which cover complex subjects. (e.g. learning about the body or solar system. Actually, my sister learnt the solar system aged 3).

You have BRAINS in your HEAD. You have FEET in your SHOES. You can STEER yourself any DIRECTION you CHOOSE. Dr Suess

Most books, websites and bookstores give a useful narrative to help you make good choices. It is also worth checking the reviews and speaking with others to get some ideas.

This is not an exhaustive list, as it suggests it holds some useful tips.

We would love to know how you get on and if you found these tips helpful. Please do get in touch.



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