Have you ever been in the library or a bookstore with your child and wondered which books will help your child most? Which books are too easy and which are too hard?

- A book that is too easy will not challenge your child, but it might be good for building fluency, since he will be able to easily read this book by himself.
- A book that is too hard for your child to read might cause frustration, but it could be a good book for you and your child to read together.
- A book that is just right will challenge him but not frustrate him.

Here are two simple ways to help your child select a book.

### Helping Your Child Choose the Right Book for His Reading Level

These are general guidelines for finding the right level of book. However, don’t discourage a child who wants to try a difficult book because the subject is interesting or a friend recommends it. Encourage your child to read many types of books, including picture books that are more grown-up, informational books, biographies, and poetry. Just like adults, some children prefer information to fiction. The more types of books a child tries, the better the chance she has of finding a genre that gives her pleasure and inspires him to read more. Just have fun with books!

**FIVE FINGER RULE**

Teach your child the five finger rule. Have her open the book to any page and begin to read.

- If she misses five or more words on a page, the book is a challenge for her right now.
- If she doesn’t miss any words, the book is a breeze—the book may be too easy.
- If she misses three words, it is just right.

### Choosing Books for Young Children

Source: Read with Me, a Reading is Fun Parent-Teacher Partnership

Parents, caregivers, and teachers can choose from a wide variety of books for young children. Sharing different kinds of books with children helps them enjoy different kinds of reading experiences.

Some books help children build confidence as they join in with a repeated rhyme. Others jump-start the imagination with tales about talking animals or a grandmother who flies. Books about familiar objects, people, and events are reassuring to young children, while books with unfamiliar topics can excite them about new ideas and places.

### Ten Tips for Choosing Books for Children of All Ages

- Have children choose their own books as soon as they start showing a preference for one over another.
- Find the children’s section of your local library. Get to know the librarian, who can be a great resource.
- Find out what your child is interested in, and help choose books that are related to his or her interests.
- Ask friends, family, and teachers what books their children have enjoyed; try a book swap.
- If your child does not like a book you are reading together, put it away. Reading is a fun time to share, not a time to fight.
- Again, again, again! Children may want to read the same book many times, even if you think they have outgrown it.

(continued)
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### Specific Ideas for Choosing Books for Different Ages of Children

#### BABIES AND TODDLERS
- Very young children are attracted by brightly colored pictures of simple objects.
- Young children are listeners, and they respond well to simple texts and good rhythm.
- Wordless books stimulate children both visually and mentally, and encourage them to create their own stories.
- Young children are delighted with board books and cloth books, and you will like it that they are practically indestructible.

#### NURSERY SCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN
- Mother Goose, nursery stories, and other books depicting familiar objects and experiences are enjoyable to children in this age group.
- These children like listening to slightly complex texts with good rhythm and effective word repetition.
- Children of this age group are coordinated enough to have constructive fun with toy-like books that may pop up, move, or provide other astonishments.

#### EARLY SCHOOL YEARS (AGES 5-8)
- A few children may learn to read before they are in the first grade. Most learn during first grade. Many learn even later.
- For reading to or with children, select picture books with strong storylines and character development.
- Some publishers produce books, generally called easy readers, that newly independent readers often enjoy.
- As children develop their reading skills, they become able to handle stories of some complexity. The vocabulary should be relatively familiar, while including some challenging words.
- A lot of informational books have been published for the early grades. These books encourage children to read about topics that interest them and to satisfy their curiosity about complex subjects. Reading these books also helps children to become more comfortable reading textbooks in school.

#### OLDER CHILDREN (AGES 9-12 AND OLDER)
- Consider the child’s personality traits and personal preferences. Make your selection with the child in mind; choose an informational book or a novel in an area of specific interest.
- Publishers sometimes indicate on the cover or book jacket the age level or grade level for which they think that book is most suitable. Don’t hesitate to choose a book that may be suggested for someone older than the child you are selecting for. If a book is beyond a child’s reading ability, it can be read to him or her now, and later on by the child. It is also possible to find picture books that, because of the subject or artwork, will be just right for an older child. An interesting story in a beautiful, well-illustrated book offers the child an aesthetic experience to enjoy over and over again.
- Young people love paperbacks. Reprints of hardcover titles for every reading level are widely available as paperbacks. In addition, there are many children’s books published only in paperback formats.

From The Children’s Book Council at http://www.cbcbooks.org/index.html