



## What Kids Really Want to Read



Even if you are not familiar with children's books, you know more about your child than anyone else does. You have the best possible chance to find a good fit. A boy who dislikes reading may become engrossed in a book about his favourite athlete. A girl who rarely finishes books may discover a series that makes her feel as if she's found new friends. Knowing your children's interests helps you to tell when a book is "just right".

Don't worry if you can't find the perfect book right away. Make a list of your child's interest and then go to the library. If possible, select books you're also interested in, because enthusiasm is contagious, says Dr. Deborah Wooten of the University of Tennessee.

If you and your child aren't enjoying a book you've selected, don't be afraid to try something else.

### Early Grades

Some children learn to read very young. Even if your child can read alone, Wooten advises that you should spend some time each day reading aloud to him or her. As you're reading, ask questions about the story. Talk about what might happen next, and draw connections to your child's life.

Children in early grades learn from picture books, but they can handle more text. For the books you read together, look for complex stories and advanced character development.

If your child isn't reading independently yet or needs help, speak with his or her teacher, who may have ideas about how to deal with the situation. Browse the easy reader section at your local library. You'll find books with simple vocabulary that build confidence, designed for children struggling to read.

Wooten says not to worry, if your child insists on reading books labeled for lower grades. Once our child gains confidence, he or she will gradually move on to more challenging books.

### **Older Children**

By grade three or four, readers usually develop personal preferences. Unfortunately, some may be developing a preference not to read.

Resistant readers think books are boring, but you can often find books that spark their deeper interests. "If your child likes basketball, help him pick a great basketball book," Wooten says. "Always offer several choices to give your child some control."

Consider graphic novels, (comics), topical magazines, funny books, mysteries, and stories about weird events or strange people. Don't worry whether a particular book is "appropriate" reading material. The important thing is that your child is reading something he or she wants to read.

Good readers need help branching out. Learn who your child's favourite author is. Librarians, websites, and bookstore staff can recommend similar books by the same author or others.

Tell your child to ask friends and teachers for recommendations. Remind him or her that it doesn't hurt to try something new.

Adapted from IRA brochure "What Kids Really Want to Read"

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