

Let's Talk Book Shopping for Children!

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Whether you are at your local bookshop or your bookshelves at home, the question remains the same; how do I know if my child has chosen a book appropriate for their reading level? My approach to helping children make their own book choices is anchored in the philosophy held by two educators, Gail Bushey and Joan Moser, who co-authored *The Daily CAFÉ*.

The main goal for allowing children to make their own book choice is to put their interests at the forefront of their reading. This actually allows a flow of intrinsic motivation to help push readers through their natural/developmental reading struggles. For example, train your children to seamlessly learn content-specific vocabulary such as caboose, coal, and locomotive, while reading about their favorite form of transportation.

Consider Your Child's Reading Ability

While a child's interests and empowering choice is paramount for book selection, some equally important guiding questions help to aim at making sure your reader is on the right track. It is important that your child can read the words on the page and understands what she is reading. Keep in mind that the purpose for reading is to become a better reader.

Ask Your Child These Questions

Can you read the words on the page?

Do you understand what you are reading?

Is this book helping you to become a better reader?

Consider the Five-Finger Rule

Another simple assessment for book choice is the five-finger rule. How does it work? A child opens her book of choice to any page and starts reading out loud. If she makes one or two errors on the page, the book is good for her level. If she makes three errors, move to comprehension questions to confirm that she still understands what she is reading.

I generally tell my students that they are not ready for the book yet if they are making four or more errors on a page. I also follow up with a question; will this book help you to become a better reader right now? It is always best if students reach their own self-actualization that they need to make a better book

choice, rather than the adult/teacher telling them to choose another book.

If you want to learn more about the Lexile levels of the books your child is reading, here are some links that can help:

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/bookwizard/?search=1&prefilter=books&filters=&text=nate%20the%20great>

<https://fab.lexile.com>

<https://www.readinga-z.com/learninga-z-levels/level-correlation-chart>

Happy reading time with your child!

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