Choosing Books for Young Children

Parents can introduce young children to the world of reading by choosing books that match their age, development, and interests. A child’s book is something special—a world of ideas and fun. Parents can help children learn to love the world of reading by introducing books that capture their interest. To be most effective, books need to be appropriate to the age and developmental level of the children in the group, and appropriate to the interests of the particular children.

Here are some basic tips parents should consider when choosing books for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

**Babies and Toddlers Like...**

- board books with simple stories
- photos of familiar things like babies, clothing, and toys
- photos of children doing familiar things like sleeping or playing
- goodnight books for bed time
- books about saying good-bye and hello
- animal books of all sizes and shapes
- books with simple words and good rhythms
- vinyl and cloth books, which have interesting textures

**Preschoolers Like...**

- books with a lot of action, pictures and repetition
- stories about themselves or others their own age
- stories that rhyme
- real-life stories, such as those involving fire engines, tractors, horses, etc
- books with repeated sounds, words, or ideas (“Daddy Bear climbed the tree. Mommy Bear climbed the tree. Baby Bear climbed the tree.”)
- stories with funny-sounding words ("Bzzz went the honey bee." "Clickety clack, clickety clack went the train along the track." "The farmer walked through the snow—crunch, crunch, crunch.")
- stories that can be read in 5-10 minutes, with one or two lines on each page
- stories with happy endings
- books with pictures that help tell the story

As school ends this month, check out your local library for their summer reading programs for youth. Many libraries have activities planned all summer to keep children reading and learning.

Source: eXtension