

Tips for choosing books



As you know, choosing the right book is crucial when trying to encourage a child to read. Like us adults, children might be more interested in certain topics or writing styles than others, so it's important to really take into account their interests if we want to create a long-lasting love for books. Some children might be interested in geography or science, while others might just want to get fully absorbed into a story. Some might love the speed and lightness that comes with reading funny comics, while others might enjoy a wordy chapter book with an intricate plot. But the key message is that we can find something for everyone!

Here you can find a few tips on choosing the right books.

Know your options

Take time to know which books are in your project's stock, or if you are an online volunteer, which e-books are available for you to read during your sessions.

Recommendations are gold dust!

Feel free to ask your Team Leader or volunteer peers for recommendations, as you make your choices on what to read each week. You could also read online reviews and see what other children have enjoyed. If a child has particularly enjoyed a book, find similar/suggested titles.

Share your passion

Select and try reading aloud books that you are drawn to. Don't hesitate to have a go at reading the books yourself, so that you can get to know the stories and be convincing when you encourage a child to try a book. Your passion for a particular story will shine through, and remember to share your favourites with other volunteers and with parents too.

Tailor your choices

Plan in advance books for individual children – take their interests into account.

A child might be reading chapter books at school, but with us they still want to read a picture book. That's okay – whilst we want to help them develop their reading skill, we also want to encourage reading for pleasure.

That said, encourage a child to challenge themselves if they are always reading below their ability. Try the two-book rule – you choose one, I choose one.

If not sure of a child's level – ask them to read a little to you, a line each, a page each – see if it's going to be ok for them to read when you're gone.

Fun is the key

Don't forget the focus on enjoyment: a young reader may just enjoy the pictures of a difficult book, or an older reader may just want to relax with a picture book. There's great comfort in revisiting old favourites and children learn by repetition, becoming familiar with structures, and freeing processing power to consider other aspects of the work. We're not there to judge or to push. Just to support and foster a love of reading - any enjoyment of books is having a huge impact.

Finally, if you think we're missing a really valuable book in our stock, please let us know! Our budget is limited but we'll do our best to help.