

# Choosing the Right Book

Children need to learn how to select a book. First of all, offer them a few books to choose from. Don't give them too many at once because this can be over-whelming. Model how you pick a book, look at the cover, flip through the book, look at the illustrations, and read the back cover to see if you'd like to read more.

However, don't underestimate a child's willingness to struggle with a difficult book if highly motivated by the topic or a friend's excited recommendation. Encourage your child to read many kinds of books, including picture books that are more sophisticated, informational books, biographies and poetry. Just like adults, some children prefer books about real people and events rather than fictional stories with make believe characters. The more children are exposed to, the better the chances are that they will find something that they enjoy and will inspire them to go back for more. Below are two methods to choose from to help you and your child pick the right book.



## **FIVE FINGER RULE**

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

- If he misses five or more words on a page, the book is a challenge for him right now.
- If he doesn't miss any words, the book is a breeze – the book may be too easy.
- If he misses three words, it is just right.

## **THE "GOLDILOCKS" METHOD**

Listen to your child read the book to find out if it is too easy, just right, or too hard for her.

### **Too Easy:**

- Does she know almost every word? • Can she read it smoothly? • Does she understand the story very well?

### **Just Right:**

- Are there just a few words per page she doesn't know?
- When she reads, are some places smooth and some choppy?
- Does she understand a lot of the book?

### **Too Hard**

- Are there more than 5 words on a page she doesn't know?
- When she reads, does it sound too choppy?
- Is she confused about what is happening in most of the book?

Source: Tennessee State Improvement Grant: Helping Your Child at Home: Reading Strategies Parents Can Use

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## **Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC)**

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