

Help Kids to P.I.C.K. the Right Books

Choosing the best book can be easy when kids have a little bit of support. The secret to helping kids learn how to choose the right book is simple.

All they need to remember is P.I.C.K.

P = Purpose: We need to have kids consider their *purpose* for reading. Why are they looking for a book in the first place? Is it totally a free choice, or is there some other reason for reading it?

In order to determine *purpose*, consider asking:

- Are they reading for pleasure?
- Are they trying to learn something?
- Is the book going to be read silently or out loud?

Most often, purpose for reading can be found with a quick answer.

I = Interest. When choosing a book, it should be something of *interest*. With the many millions of books on shelves today, there's bound to be something out there for everyone. And emphasizing the interest *connections* is super-important as well.

Even if children have a short amount of time to choose books, they can determine *interest* by:

- Looking at the front cover
- Flipping through the pages to glance at photos or illustrations
- Reading the back cover

C = Comprehend. Is the book something that the child can *comprehend*? Can he or she understand what's read? Is it a book that is appropriate for his or her level or abilities?

Children can quickly assess if it's an appropriate book for them by opening the book and choosing a page – the book is appropriate for them if they are able to understand what they read.

Children can determine *comprehension* asking themselves:

- Did I understand what I just read?
- Do I remember what I read?

K = Know the Words. Readers should be able to decode -- or read -- and understand the majority of the words on the page. The key is to remembering the "Five Finger Rule."

The "Five Finger Rule" outlines a general idea of how many words a reader should be able to read on each page.

- 0-1 unknown words = book is too easy
- 2-3 unknown words = book is just right
- 4-5 unknown words = book is too difficult

Knowing P.I.C.K. is empowering for kids. They want to know how to choose books that fit for them -- books that are enjoyable, fun, and exciting. It's all about giving our kids the tools they need to be strong, confident readers. Choosing the best book is the starting point.