

What kinds of texts should I read to my child?

Question 15 from Helping Your Child Become a Reader
(Scanlon, Anderson, Barnes, Morse, & Yurkewecz-Stellato, 2024¹)

For children just beginning to learn to read and write: Alphabet books can help children learn the names and sounds of letters. Also, books with a lot of rhyming words, like many Dr. Seuss books, can help children learn to notice the sounds in spoken words. This ability will help them as they learn how the letters in printed words are connected to the sounds in spoken words. Beginning readers will also enjoy and benefit from the kinds of books appropriate for all readers (see below).



For all readers: It is useful to provide children with access to a wide variety of written materials including all kinds of books and items accessible via the internet. The goal is to capture children's interests and to help them develop both a fascination with reading and the knowledge that supports comprehension.



It is useful to select texts that are a good match for children's interests as indicated by what they talk about, ask about, and/or do (e.g., sports, collections, etc.) and/or authors whose books they enjoy. Below we have listed some links that can be helpful in choosing and/or accessing reading materials. Children's teachers and librarians are generally very happy to help caregivers select books as well.

- Colorín Colorado (colorincolorado.org) enables users to search for books by categories such as age, language, country, and theme. It also provides resources for families including families of English Learners/Multilinguals.
- Unite for Literacy (uniteforliteracy.com) provides books that can be read and/or listened to online. Many of the books can be listened to in English and one or more other languages.
- Reading Rockets (readingrockets.org/books-and-authors/books) provides suggestions for texts that can be read to or by children, lists of books by popular children's authors, and collections of themed texts on popular topics.

As you read books (and other materials) to or with children be sure to engage in conversations about what happens or is learned. Afterwards, leave the texts that have been read available for children to look at. Using the illustrations, children are likely to be able to remember what the texts were about and perhaps some of the things that were learned while listening to the text.

Books, Books (and other reading materials), Everywhere! Having reading materials available wherever children spend time will provide many opportunities for children to enjoy them.

¹ The complete 23 question booklet can be accessed at: eltep.org/isa-parent-booklet
All individual questions and the complete booklet can be shared for non-commercial purposes.