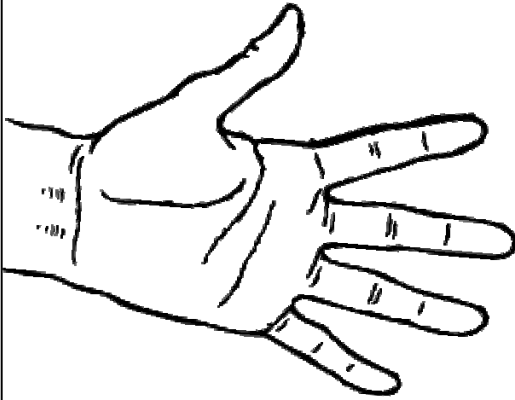


Selecting a Just Right Book

When teaching or when learning to read, it is important to select just right books. One of the rules of thumb to use when selecting a just right book is to use the five finger rule. Take the book and begin reading one of the pages. Each time a word is encountered that is unknown, put up a finger, if you have five fingers up by the end of the page, the level of the book is too hard. This strategy works for all reading levels, with the exception of the emergent reader. The emergent reader will be reading books with minimal words that rely on picture clues. The text in the emergent books look something like this:



I like green.
I like red.
I like blue.
I like orange.
I like all colors.

or

The book is on the table.
The book is beside the table.
The book is under the table

or

I can jump.
I can run.
I can walk.
I can skip.
I can hop.

For these early emergent type books, the picture cues are used to help make the connection to the word. The books are re-read several times. It may look like the approach is memory, however, memory is a reading skill. Once the book is known, the strategy is to read the book backwards or point to different words on different pages of the book. Then, print the words on cards or a piece of paper to see if the words are known out of context. If they are, it is time to move to another book. These types of books build sight vocabulary and help the reader to move up the levels. Some readers will require a year to move from a level 1 to a level 5 book (or from a A to a D book) depending on the types of levelled books being used.

There are many types of leveled books, here are a few to help you:

1. A to Z has many printable versions online for a reasonable membership price.
<http://www.readinga-z.com>
2. Scholastic (uses an A to Z level)
<http://www.scholastic.ca/readinglevels/>
3. Leveled Reader.Com (Uses an A to Z scale)
http://www.leveledreader.com/cart.php?target=category&category_id=341

You will need a minimum of 4-5 books at EACH level, many young readers will read at the same level for 2-3 months. Readers vary at their rate of reading development. One child may advance 2-3 levels in a year, another child may advance by 10-15. Every individual is different. Books should always be at a just right level to avoid frustrating the learner.