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CHOOSING BOOKS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

The function of books for the young child is not to present new information, but to recreate for him the world he knows and by recreating it to strengthen his understanding of it. New knowledge should come from firsthand experience—not from the printed page.

Books which are desirable for the preschool child are not only about familiar, everyday subjects, but are short and written in simple, correct English with many clear illustrations in color.

The basic needs of a child, which books may help him achieve, include:

- The need for physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual security.
- The need to belong, to be a part of a group.
- The need to love and to be loved.
- The need to achieve, to do or be something worthy of respect.
- The need to play, to manipulate, touch, compare, feel, lift, and learn.
- The need for aesthetic satisfaction.

Distinguishing characteristics of a well-written story:

- Adequate theme.
- Lively Plot.
- Memorable characters.
- Distinctive style.

What does a child demand of illustrations?

- The child begins as a stern literalist, demanding illustrations that are obviously a truthful interpretation of the text.
- The child, being literal, also wants the pictures synchronized with the text.
- Children are very fond of action in pictures.

Stories

In choosing books, the following suggestions are helpful:

- Choose books that are right for the child's present stage of development. The child should enjoy the book. *Two-year-olds* enjoy pictures of animals, children, and familiar objects; simple stories of daily routine; animal sounds; and names of familiar objects. *Three-year-olds* enjoy actual stories with a simple plot of factual material familiar to the child. *Four- and five-year-olds* enjoy stories that are a little longer, with a more definite plot and wider range of subject matter.
- For preschool children, select books with simple plots that show real activities of people and animals. Children prefer stories full of action that relate to their own experience.
- Check the physical aspects of a book. Children under six often treat books roughly. Therefore, the book should have sturdy covers and firm stitching. The size should not be too big and heavy for a child to enjoy. The size and spacing of the type should make it easy to read.

Keep books easily accessible on a lower shelf. Let book and story time have a regular place in the routine of the day.

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