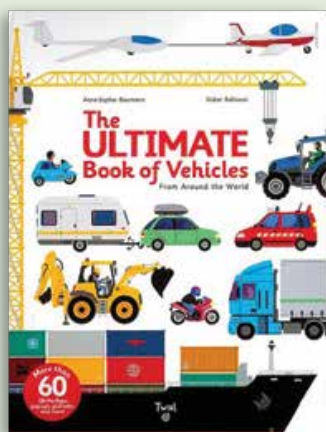


Book Nook

This month's Book Nook topic is...

Books for Kids Who Don't Like Books



Book reading is one of the most important things you can do with your child to build his early literacy skills. Reading with your child increases his understanding and vocabulary, and helps him understand how books and print work. It also shows him that reading is a fun and rewarding activity. However, not every child likes books.

There are many reasons why a child may not like book reading – maybe it's because he's got a short attention span, or is very active, or maybe it has to do with a language delay. Whatever the reason, it can be difficult to read with your child if he isn't interested. And what's more, the emergent literacy-building strategies we share in the Book Nook can really only work if your child is interested and engaged.

In this book nook, I'll share some of the ideas I use to try to engage children who don't like reading. Once you can help your child have fun with one book, they will start to see that reading can be an enjoyable activity.

Choose books based on your child's interests

Your child's interests are the first thing to think about when selecting a book for him. Many children have specific interests. Whether it's dinosaurs, planets, rocks, or vehicles, your child will likely enjoy looking at pictures of his favourite things. A bonus is that factual books, like car encyclopedias, often expose children to new, higher level, words and ideas.

Choose interactive books

Interactive books have parts that move or do something. For example, interactive books can have flaps to open or buttons to press. In some ways, these books are a lot like toys, because there is so much you can do with them!

My current favourite interactive book is "Press Here" by Herve Tullet. Every page includes instructions for the reader to physically engage with the book by tapping, shaking, or pressing it. This book is appealing for children of a variety of ages.

Choose books with interesting pictures

Often, if a book has great pictures, a child will want to look at it, even if they aren't that interested in the story. The book "Waddle" by Rufus Butler Seder, includes animals drawn in "scanimation" which means that the creatures appear to move as you turn the pages. This is a great way to tempt even the most reluctant reader.

Choose books based on songs

Many children's songs are available in book form. If your child has a favourite song, like "Happy Birthday" or "Old MacDonald", try to find the song in a book. You can turn the pages while your child sings along.

One of my favourite books based on a song is "The Wheels on the Bus" by Paul O. Zelinsky. Not only is it based on a very popular song, it is also interactive – there are tabs to pull and flaps to lift on every page.

Choose silly books

Another way to make books fun is to try out books with unusual or silly topics. "Walter the Farting Dog" by William Kotzwinkle and Glenn Murray, and "Everyone Poops" by Taro Gomi, are popular choices for many of the children I work with because they include "potty" words.

There are also intentionally silly books, like "The Book with No Pictures" by BJ Novak, where the person reading the book *has* to say every word written on the page, including goofy-sounding made-up words like "bluurf".

These types of books can really get the interaction going, particularly if your child has a silly sense of humour!

Make your own books

Another option is to make your own book. It doesn't have to be fancy, but you could consider printing out a few photos of your child doing his favourite activity, or spending time with some of his friends, and then look at the pictures together. Children tend to be interested in themselves, and might really enjoy looking at an album where they are the focus.

Another idea is to have your child help you make a book – you can have them tell you a story, and they can draw the pictures while you write down the words.

Remember to turn book reading into a conversation!

Once you've found a book your child wants to look at, the final step to keep him engaged is to turn book reading into a conversation. That means reading *with*, not to your child. It can be really tempting to either just read to your child, which involves reading the book from start to finish while he just sits and listens, or to turn book reading into a time to test by asking lots of close-ended questions (What's that? Where are they? What's her name?).

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Remember to turn book reading into a conversation! *Con't*

Reading *with* your child means giving him opportunities to make comments and ask questions about parts of the book that he finds interesting. By having a conversation with your child as you read the book, you make sure that he is actively involved throughout the reading.

You can check out [past posts](#) to learn more about turning book reading into an conversation.

I hope this post helps you find a book that fits for your child. Remember, the primary goal of book reading is to make it a time that you and your child can both enjoy!



A little more about me

I'm a Speech-Language Pathologist working at The Hanen Centre as a Program Specialist. I combine my background in language and literacy development with my knowledge of adult learning to offer evidence-based face to face and online trainings to early childhood educators, SLPs and parents.

The Book Nook combines my passion for children's literature with my knowledge of language and literacy development. I hope you enjoy it!

Tamara