

## Partners in Learning

What makes children love reading? If children are reluctant to read at home, they may not yet have found books to love . . . books they can't put down and have them reading by flashlight, books that make them laugh out loud or maybe shed a few tears. So how can we find that perfect book that will ignite a child's passion for reading?



First of all, look for award winners. These books have received honours for good reason: They include engaging characters, relatable situations, and often address concerns, ideas and issues that resonate with children. Sites for the [Caldecott Medal](#), the [Newbery Medal](#), the [Rocky Mountain Book Awards](#) and [this one from Chapters](#) have lists of award winning books for children of all ages.

A great resource for book recommendations is your local librarian, who has the opportunity to encounter a huge variety of quality literature for children. Your child could also check in with friends and classmates to find out what they are reading.

Secondly, consider your child's interests and age level to find a book that is a perfect match. Children often like to read about characters who are their age or a little older. For some readers, books in a series get them hooked on reading as they follow the adventures of the same characters over the course of several books. Many children prefer non-fiction to fiction, and may love to research a favourite sport, find out about an interesting animal, or learn about another culture. Some reluctant readers may enjoy graphic novels or magazines. Keep in mind that all reading is good reading. Engaging with any form of text helps children see themselves as readers and develop the reading habit.

Reading to your child is a great practice at any age. Your reading will allow him or her to access more complex text and may inspire independent reading. Your child will also see your enthusiasm for and enjoyment of reading, and that modelling is powerful.

Finally, give your child the power to choose his or her own reading material. If a book that seems a bit too easy is chosen, perhaps your child's confidence will be boosted or the comfort of reading something familiar and manageable meets his or her needs at that time. If the book seems difficult, keep in mind that motivation and background knowledge are huge factors in how well a child is able to negotiate text. Experts tell us to never take a book out of a child's hands. Finding that perfect book, the one that inspires, provokes thinking, provides an adventure, or opens a child's mind to a new perspective can be the beginning of a lifelong love of reading.

