

Family stories should be aimed at the age level half way between the oldest and youngest child present. Wide interest stories are the best. Some examples are:

James and the Giant Peach by
Roald Dahl
Buffalo Woman by Paul Goble
Babe: the Gallant Pig by Dick
King-Smith
Cricket in Times Square by
George Selden
Favorite Folktales From Around
the World ed. Jane Yolen
And anything by an author
named Patricia Polacco

8. Read the story yourself before you read it to your children.
That way you will know what's coming and where to take your breaks.
9. If after reading the story you decide you don't like it, choose another book to use.
WHY? See number 6.
10. Set up the rules in advance.
Tell them what kind of story this will be. (LISTENING or INTERACTIVE, ETC....) And what you expect from them. (QUIET OR RESPONSES, ETC...)
11. Check the room for distractions. (Shut the door, turn of the TV,

have them sit with their backs to doors or windows, etc.)
Make sure that every one is comfortable, including you.

12. After the story is over give the listener a moment to let the story settle. Before you ask those questions, remember that the idea is to make the listener enjoy the story and reading. Giving a pop quiz on characters, plot and content can ruin a good story.



Children's Department
Vineland Public Library
1058 E. Landis Ave.
Vineland NJ 08360
(856)794-4244

www.vinelandlibrary.org
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Families and Books

*Prepared by Barbara Capoferri,
former Head of Children's Services*
**Studies have shown conclusively
that children who are read to
become readers.**

When reading to your children, try the following guidelines so that the experience is enjoyable to the whole family.

1. Children learn by example.
Show them that you are a reader by reading something.
2. Reading is reading!
Newspapers, magazines, comics or the back of the cereal box, everything counts.
3. Share what you read. Tell them about stories that you read. Or talk about the stories you liked as a child.
4. Ten minutes a day can change your children's lives.
It only takes a few minutes to read to a child.
5. Reading aloud helps your child in school. It improves your child's

comprehension, vocabulary, language skills and their knowledge of the world around them.

6. Choose a story that you like. If you don't find your story interesting, neither will your listeners.
7. Choose an age appropriate story.

Preschool needs, bright colors, clear pictures, few words and simple or no plots. Some examples are:

Good Night Owl by Patricia Hutchins
Rosie's Walk by Patricia Hutchins
Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See by Bill Martin
In the Tall, Tall Grass by Denise Fleming
We're Going on a Bear Hunt by Michael Rosen
Harry the Dirty Dog by Gene Zion

Kindergarten children need a simple plot with few twists, and they like a variety of illustration styles. Some examples are:

Millions of Cats by Wanda Gag
Horton Hatches the Egg by Dr Seuss
This Quiet Lady by Charlotte Zolotow
The Ghost Eye Tree by Bill Martin
Seven Blind Mice by Ed Young

1st and 2nd Graders are beginning to read on their own. They need stories that are going to help them expand their language skills and that will widen their cultural horizons. They still want stories that are illustrated. Some examples are:

Make Way for Ducklings by Robert McCloskey
Legend of the Bluebonnet by Tomie dePaola
Hazel's Amazing Mother by Rosemary Wells
Strega Nona by Tomie dePaola
Talking Eggs by Robert San Souci
Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters by John Steptoe

3rd and 4th Graders are now reading on their own. They prefer stories that take them out of the familiar and into other worlds, other customs and into fantasy. Two(*) of the stories listed here are longer and will take several sessions to finish. Some examples are:

Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales by Jon Scieszka
Melisande by E. Nesbit*
Dragonfly's Tale by Kristina Rodanas
Charlotte's Web by E.B. White

5th and 6th Graders have developed an understanding of chronological ordering of past events. They like historical fiction but are not too old for picture books. Some examples of picture books for this age group are:

Flight: the Journey of Charles Lindbergh by Robert Burleigh
Rosebud and the Red Flannel by Ethel Pochocki
The Shooting of Dan McGrew. The Cremation of Sam McGee by Robert Service
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred D. Taylor

Young Adults just think they're too old for stories. The truth is that they love to listen. Their interests are varied but ghosts, romance and adventure stories will capture and hold their interest. You may start reading these a chapter or two at a time but your listeners will hunt the books down and finish them on their own. Some examples are:

Spiders in the Hairdo by David Holt
Hatchet by Gary Paulsen
Nothing But the Truth by Avi