

What kinds of texts should my child be reading?

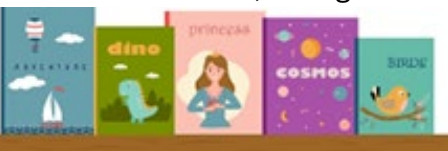
Question 2 from *Helping Your Child Become a Reader*
(Scanlon, Anderson, Barnes, Morse, & Yurkewecz-Stellato, 2024¹)

Texts **the child chooses**. Let children have some choice in what to read – even if it is the same text(s) over and over again. We are all more interested in reading things that we like. Further, for children who are in the process of learning to read, the sense of fluency that comes with repeatedly reading the same text can be very encouraging.



Easy texts. Provide lots of opportunities for children to read texts that are fairly easy for them. This can make reading more enjoyable and help to build motivation for reading. When children are asked to read texts that are too hard, they can become frustrated and lose confidence. Children's teachers and librarians can help with selecting texts that are right for children's current reading skills.

More challenging texts. Sometimes, because children are interested in a topic, they might want to read something that is too challenging. For example, they might want to read about the life cycle and/or behaviors of a particular animal, how to assemble a toy, or how to get to the next level of a game. In these cases, caregivers can provide support by reading the more challenging parts out loud with children. Or, caregivers might read the text to children first and then listen to them read it.



Providing an appropriate level of support can help children see the importance and benefits of reading to learn and keep them motivated.

Dictated Stories. Many children enjoy telling stories or composing messages that someone else writes for them (or types on a computer or phone). These stories sometimes become long and involved and often include the child as a main character (for example, as the star of a sporting event or as the subject of an adventure story or fantasy). Often children are able to read these stories even though they contain many words they might not otherwise be able to identify – especially when they have multiple opportunities to read them (with assistance). Stories children have created are easier for them to read because they already know the storyline. After all, the child is the author and so has a sense of what words to expect. Children who enjoy writing/dictating stories will often enjoy reading them over and over to family members and friends. The more reading children do, the easier reading gets and the more likely that previously unfamiliar printed words will be readily identified.

Note that children who are inclined to dictate lengthy stories sometimes forget aspects of the story as they get deeper into it. This can make it difficult for them to read the story. In such cases, it can be useful to have the child read each sentence after it has been written – “to make sure it says what they want it to say”. Then, every few sentences or so, the child can be encouraged to read everything that has been written so far. This process will help them remember the story as far as it has gotten and decide what should come next. This process may have the added benefit of helping them to learn to read some of the words in the text effortlessly.



¹ The complete 23 question booklet can be downloaded at: eltep.org/isa-parent-booklet
All individual questions and the complete booklet can be downloaded and shared for non-commercial purposes.