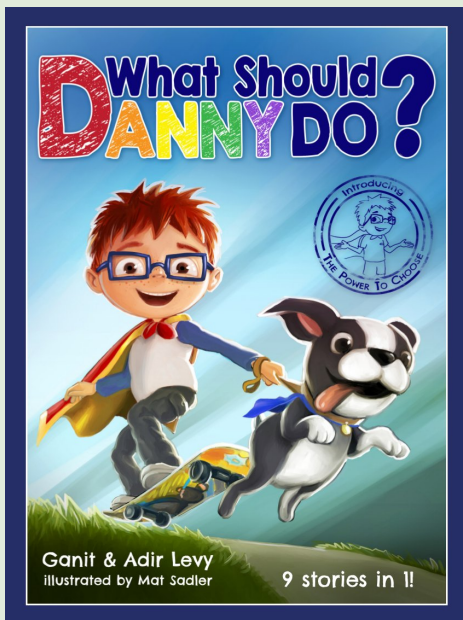


Book Nook

This month's Book Nook topic is...



Problem Solving with *What Should Danny Do?*

Most stories revolve around a problem that the characters in the book need to solve. One way to deepen your child's story understanding is to talk about the problems that come up, and to get your child thinking about how the characters might solve the problems. This will build your child's own problem-solving skills and give him some tools she can use when reading and writing on her own later.

Let's get started!

The book

What Should Danny Do? By Ganit and Adir Levy, Illustrated by Mat Sadler

Why we picked it:

This is a "choose your own" story. The book follows Danny through his day as he faces many dilemmas that children encounter on a daily basis. For example, Danny goes down to breakfast and realises that his younger brother is using Danny's favourite plate. The reader can choose how Danny solves each of his problems – for example, should Danny use a different plate, or should he yell until he gets the plate he wants? The story changes based on how the reader decides Danny should solve his problem.

Reading the book for the first time

Children will usually have more to say about a book once they are familiar with it. That's because after they hear it a few times, they understand more of what is happening, and are able to think about the story in different ways. On a second or third reading of a book, it's much easier to follow the plot and see details you didn't notice before.

The first time you read *What Should Danny Do?*, focus on helping your child grasp the basics of the story – the characters, setting, problem, actions and resolution (at Hanen, we refer to these basic elements as “CSPAR”, and you can read more about how to encourage your child's understanding of them in [this Book Nook post](#)). Keep the story moving and have short conversations that help your child remember the characters and their actions, and also identify the problems in the story.

For example, you could make a comment like “Danny has a problem – his brother is using his favourite plate.” Or “Why do you think Danny is angry?” These kinds of comments and questions will reinforce your child's basic understanding of the plot.

Re-Reading:

As soon as you think your child has a basic understanding of the story, you can start to have longer conversations and talk more deeply about it. You can do this before you begin the book or after you've finished it, or on any page that grabs your child's interest and attention.

Encourage your child to think about the problem and use his reasoning skills using these two strategies:

1. By making “thinking-out-loud” comments
2. Asking questions that build understanding

Make thinking-out-loud comments:

“Thinking-out-loud” comments show your child how you are thinking about the story and trying to figure out things that aren't actually stated in the book.

“Thinking-out-loud” comments start with words like:

- “I'm thinking that...”
- “I'm wondering about...”
- “I'm trying to figure out...”

Unlike questions, comments don't require a response. But if you make a comment based on a part of the book your child is interested in, and then pause to give him time to think, chances are he'll want to say something about it!

Here are some examples of "thinking-out-loud" comments you could use to get your child thinking about the problems in this book and how they might be solved:

- "I'm thinking Danny's pancakes will taste just as good on a different plate."
- "I'm wondering how Danny can figure out a way to play with Charlie."
- "I'm trying to figure out if there's anything that would make Danny feel better."

The way your child responds to these comments will give you an idea of how much he understands. You can build on these comments and use the pictures and text to support your child's understanding. For example, if you say, "I'm wondering how Danny can figure out a way to play with Charlie" and your child doesn't respond, you could point to the race car tracks and say "maybe they could build two separate tracks and race."

By making these types of comments, you are modelling a way for your child to express his thoughts and ideas. You are also demonstrating different ways your child can think about what's happening in the book, and how he can look for meaning beyond the written words of a story.

Ask questions that build understanding:

Once your child is familiar with *What Should Danny Do?*, you can ask questions that go beyond what is written on the page and shown in the illustrations. This will help him draw on his knowledge and reasoning skills. For example:

- "Why do you think Danny wants new shoes?"
- "How come Charlie is making fun of Danny?"
- "What would you do if you were Danny and your brother was making fun of you?"
- "Would you share your ice cream with me if my cone fell on the ground?"

If your child has difficulty answering questions like these, suggest an answer yourself and continue with the book.

The more times you read the story, the more you will be able to make "thinking-out-loud" comments about the problems in the story, and ask questions that deepen your child's understanding. As you engage your child in conversations that encourage him to think more deeply about a book, you are helping to develop the comprehension skills he'll need to read successfully on his own.

Happy reading!