A Few Notes on Reading Levels

Our Fountas and Pinnell (F and P) Reading Assessment gives teachers a wealth of information. Accuracy, Fluency/Rate, and Comprehension are all assessed with the purposes of assisting teachers with instruction and helping students read independently at levels that best suits their abilities.

The Fountas and Pinnell Reading Assessment is not the only way teachers determine reading levels. In fact, reading levels determined by the F and P assessment are not always a one to one match to a student’s abilities on any given day. There are many factors that can influence reading ability including interest, background knowledge, fluency/rate issues, and vocabulary knowledge.

Teachers depend on formative assessments such as guided reading observations and notes, conferring observations and notes, exit slips, and written responses to reading. Teachers use these informal assessments along with the F and P assessment to determine an overall reading level that best matches the student.

If your child isn't frustrated with the books he or she is reading, let 'em read! There are many benefits of reading below level books that might be considered "too easy." Reading is like training for a marathon. While you will need to run some fast miles and do some speed work, 90% of your training is about laying a solid base, which includes lots and lots of easy miles.

Additionally, kids should be encouraged to self-evaluate books as being too hard or just right instead of being locked into a certain level. One strategy includes holding up a finger every time a student gets to a word he or she doesn't know in a new book. If there are more than 5 errors in the first few pages (or a page for a chapter book) it’s a good idea to wait on the book or have an adult read it aloud to the student.