



My child is struggling with reading, what do I do?

If your child is struggling with reading, do not delay. Sometimes parents are told, "They'll grow out of it." However, research shows that many struggling readers require direct intervention in order to improve. This difficulty is often called dyslexia – difficulty (dys) with words (lexia).

Research shows that if intervention is not provided and children are still struggling with reading in 3rd grade, it will take longer to remediate. Children with chronic ear infections or speech and language problems when young can have reading problems later. Problems can also show up in middle school or high school as reading becomes more complex. If a child is learning a second language, it is important to sort out language learning issues from reading issues. A specialist can help with this.

Children in public schools with reading difficulties might be eligible for special education under the Specific Learning Disability category. More schools now have early intervention programs outside special education, sometimes known as Response to Intervention (RTI). These programs may provide extra or special reading instruction before a child is referred for determining special education eligibility.

Where should you start?

- Gather your data that shows that your child is struggling, for example STAR scores, recordings of him reading aloud, report cards, or spelling tests.
- Talk to your child's teacher about your concerns and your supporting information.
- Find out if your child has received extra or special reading instruction and if so, what that was.
- If you still do not feel that your child is getting the help she needs to learn to read, write a letter to your school district requesting an assessment for special education eligibility. Use your data to support your request.
- Make reading as pleasurable as you can by reading aloud to your child, and by providing audio books and extra reading support outside of school.

If a school assessment does not show your child is eligible for services, before signing that you agree, have someone who understands these assessments go over them to determine if all the appropriate tests were given and the scores are reported as one would expect. If it still appears that your child's reading difficulty isn't severe enough for special education, ask the school what other services they will offer. Schools are required to address the needs of struggling readers and they have many tools to help students learn to read.

More Information

Here are some sources for information on children who struggle with reading:

International Dyslexia Association [www.interdys.org]

Learning Disabilities Association of America [www.lidaamerica.org]

National Center for Learning Disabilities [www.ld.org]

Find out about reading programs and interventions that are based on evidence. This should be from a source other than the company that designed the program.

U.S. Dept of Education What Works Clearinghouse [www.whatworks.ed.gov]

Florida Center for Reading Research [www.fcrr.org]

Response to Intervention [www.rti4success.org]

Helping your child now may mean less help is needed later!



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