

Reading Fluency

The National Reading Panel (2000) found that an effective reading program must include instruction in reading fluency, a critical component of learning to read. Differences in reading fluency distinguish good readers from poor; a lack of reading fluency is a good predictor of reading comprehension problems (Stanovich 1991). Educators can think of reading fluency as a bridge between the two major components of reading----decoding and comprehension.

Reading fluency is complex and multifaceted. Reading fluency is made up of at least three key elements: “**accurate**reading of connected text as a conversational **rate** with appropriate **prosody or expression***.”* (Hudson, Lane, Pullen 2005)Each of these elements; accuracy, rate and prosody, has a clear connection to reading comprehension. Without accurate word reading, the reader will not have access to the author’s intended meaning, and this can lead to misinterpretations of the text. Slow, laborious reading of the text taxes the reader’s capacity to construct an ongoing interpretation of the passage. Poor prosody can lead to confusion through inappropriate or meaningless groupings of words, or through inappropriate applications of expression. At its heart, fluency instruction is focused on ensuring that word reading becomes automatic so that readers have sufficient cognitive resources to understand what they read. “A fluent reader decodes text automatically, and therefore can devote his/her attention to comprehending what is read.” (LaBerge and Samuels) (Adapted from: Teaching Reading Sourcebook 2013 Honig/Diamond Gutlohn)

A few activities parents can do to support reading fluency at home…

* **Repeated Reading:** read and re-read easy books is a great way to build your child’s fluency. Have your child select a favorite book and read it aloud two or three times.
* **Model Fluent Reading:** reading aloud daily, be sure to use expression or funny voices as you read aloud.
* **Echo Read:** you read a phrase, sentence or paragraph aloud to model fluent reading. Your child then reads the same passage like an echo. Continue this pattern until you have read the book, story, or page of text with your child.
* **Paired Reading:** First, you will read a poem or short passage to your child. Then, you and the child will read the poem or passage together several times. Finally, have your child read the poem or passage to you. Great books to use for paired reading are: *You Read to Me, Ill Read to You: Very Short Stories to Read Together* by Mary Ann Hoberman.
* **Sight Words:** review basic sight words (high frequency words) with your child to make sure that he or she knows these words automatically. Knowing these common words on sight will help to improve your child’s reading accuracy and rate. For a list of basic sight words and online sight word review games, visit this website: [www.learningbooks.net/Dolchflash.html](http://www.learningbooks.net/Dolchflash.html)
* **Progress Monitoring**: a motivating research-based strategy is to chart your child’s progress. Have your child read a passage aloud and time them for one minute. Count the total number of words read correctly (if a child needs help with a word while reading, supply the word after three seconds). Do this activity weekly and chart the progress! Typical Spring Grade Level Expectations: First Grade 40-60 words, Second Grade 80-100, Third Grade 100-120, Fourth grade and above: 130-180.
* Set aside reading practice time every day. Even 5 minutes of reading fluency practice using any of the activities listed above will help to develop your child’s reading fluency

(Adapted from: Illinois Reading Council Journal, 38, 2010)