



Did You Know...?

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Quality Reading Instruction

5 Keys to Effective Teaching and Tutoring

Quality reading instruction provides a foundation for every learner to succeed in school and in their adult life. Understanding the five components of quality reading programs will help you know what to look for in your child's classroom instruction or a tutoring program to improve reading skills.

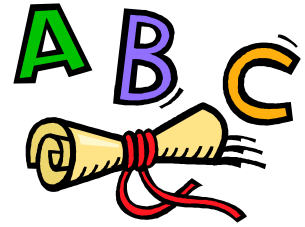
- 1. Phonemic Awareness:** Understanding that spoken language is made up of individual sounds called phonemes. English has 40+ phonemes/sounds. Example: close your eyes and say 'big' now say 'big' one sound at a time. You *hear* 3 sounds. Now say 'shout,' close your eyes and say it one sound at a time. You also hear **only** 3 sounds.
- 2. Phonics:** Learning the sound(s) that each letter or combination of letters makes. Example: 'ea' has three sounds. It says /ē/ as in **beat**; /ĕ/ as in **bread**, and /ā/ as in **break**. The 40+ phonemes are expressed by 71 letter/combinations (such as "ea", "th" "qu", "oo"). Phonics is also learning the rules of the words and WHY each word is spelled the way it is spelled. *Explicit, systematic, and sequential* instruction in phonics is the most effective way to teach reading.
- 3. Reading Fluency:** Is the ability to read smoothly and accurately. This can be done in a variety of ways. The key is to know which way is best for your child. The best way may also be a combination of the following methods for improving reading fluency:
 - 1 Minute Timings: Reading a selected passage or list of sight words out loud. It is important to discuss the vocabulary to be read **PRIOR** to reading the story.
 - Neurological Impress method: Reading together with a child for fifteen (15) minutes without stopping—*no interruptions*.
 - Skip and Drill: Reading a story and timing how many words were read in the first minute. After meeting criteria, the child may skip the next story.
 - Modeling the Story: Reading the story aloud to the child is also very helpful so the child can *hear* what good reading sounds like.
- 4. Vocabulary:** Refers to the words we must know to communicate effectively. In general, vocabulary can be described as oral vocabulary or reading vocabulary. Oral vocabulary is the words that we use in speaking or recognize in listening. Reading vocabulary is words we recognize or use in print. **The more students use new words and use them in different contexts, the more likely they are to learn the words.**
- 5. Reading Comprehension (text):** Is the ability to understand words that are written down; such as the words in books or other printed material. Reading comprehension depends on several interrelated skills: understanding oral language, decoding the printed word, reading fluently, and using strategies to increase comprehension.



Effective reading instruction helps our children *learn how to learn!*

No matter what your child's age, it's important to develop skills in all areas because significant difficulty in any one of the skill areas can cause a breakdown in the whole process of reading. Key components that help students *learn HOW to learn* through reading include:

- Previewing
- Active reading
- Reading fluency
- Inferential understanding and
- Organizing information



How will I know what my child needs to become a better reader?

Research shows that a good systematic program of reading instruction may be all that three out of four struggling readers may need to become better readers. To know what your child needs, you should make a *written request* to your child's school Student Assistance Team (SAT) for a complete reading evaluation that covers the five components of quality reading instruction. The evaluation should tell you about your child's strengths and weaknesses. This information will help you discuss reading instruction and consider options to improve your child's reading skills. If you are considering tutoring for your child, understanding the five keys to effective reading instruction will help you make an informed decision in selecting a tutor. (If, after a reasonable amount of time, your child does not respond to scientific reading instruction, you may request an evaluation for Special Education.)

I want my child to be a good reader. Does my child have to qualify for a reading tutor?

Title I schools that have been placed on the State's in need of improvement list for two or more years must offer and inform all parents of eligible children of these services. Students whose families meet certain income criteria receive priority. If your child meets these qualifications, tutoring is provided at public expense. Students that receive special education services may also be provided tutoring services as a part of their Individualized Education Program (IEP). Some families may choose to pay for a private tutor to work with their child to improve reading skills. In all cases, it is important that tutoring and classroom programs use research based practices that address all five key areas of reading.

Are there certain questions that I should ask when interviewing a tutor or teacher?

YES. When you meet with the teacher or tutor, ask that the information be given to you in writing so that you have it for future reference. You may also request an interpreter to translate the information into the language you use in your home. Asking "the right questions" will help you get specific information and open discussions about possibilities.

Contact Parents Reaching Out for other fact sheets about Free Tutoring through No Child Left Behind (Did You Know #20) or questions to ask about your child's reading program (Did You Know #18).

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