

Armenta Learning Academy

26041 Cape Dr., Suite #270, Laguna Niguel, CA 92677 / 949-367-WISE (9473) / fax 949-367-0171
academicsuccessnow@yahoo.com / www.academicsuccessnow.com

How to Catch Children Before They Fail at Reading This School Year

CCLD From the Coordinated Campaign for Learning Disabilities

The ability to read is a fundamental skill for success in life. Reading research has found compelling evidence that children who have a poor start in reading have great difficulty catching up. The consequences of a slow start in reading range from negative attitudes towards reading, reduced opportunities for vocabulary growth, and missed opportunities for development of reading comprehension strategies, to less practice in reading than other children.

Most children who become poor readers experience early and continuing difficulties in learning how to accurately identify printed words. These students have problems with “sounding out” unfamiliar words, and with developing a sight vocabulary of words they are able to read fluently and automatically. The ability to develop these skills is necessary for fluent reading and good comprehension.

Researchers have developed tests to administer to children in the early grades that will identify students who are at risk for reading failure. These tests can distinguish, with 92% accuracy, those children who will read below the 20th percentile at the end of second grade. These tests take as little as ten to fifteen minutes per child and can be administered by the classroom teacher.

Joseph K. Torgensen, distinguished Research Professor of Psychology and Education at Florida State University and a leading researcher in the area of reading, recommends a combination of two types of tests to identify students who will experience reading problems:

1. A test of knowledge of letter names or sounds. Letter name knowledge is measured by presenting each letter in simple upper case type on a single card and asking for its name. This test is best suited for children in Kindergarten. Letter sound knowledge is measured by presenting all letters in lower case type and asking for the “sound the letter makes in words.” If a consonant letter can represent two different sounds (e.g. c, g) then the tester probes for the second sound and asks for the short and long pronunciation of each vowel. This test is better suited for children in first grade.
2. A test to measure phonemic awareness (the ability to identify, think about or manipulate the individual sounds in words).

Tests That Can Help



The following are a number of tests that can be used for early screening purposes:

The Phonological Awareness Test (Robertson and Salter, 1995). This includes five different measures of phonemic awareness plus a measure of sensitivity to rhyme. This test is nationally normed on children ages 5 through 9.

The Test of Phonological Awareness (Torgensen and Bryant, 1994).

The Letter Identification subtest of the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test Revised.

The Graphemes subtest of the Phonological Awareness Test (Robertson and Salter, 1995). This test provides a comprehensive assessment of letter sound knowledge.



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Strategies That Can Help From Mrs. Armenta

Written By Julie M. Armenta M.A. Educational & Family Specialist

1. Read aloud to your child 20-30 minutes a day, or role model reading by having your children see you read. Read together as a hobby.
2. Take your children to the library and let them choose books each week to read.
3. Any reading is crucial. It is okay to have your children read comic books, magazines, etc. Any type of reading is wonderful.
4. When you read with your child, have his/her finger follow along so children learn sight words and build decoding skills.
5. Sometimes cover each line as you read. Children may be over stimulated with the black print.
6. Encourage children to discuss, summarize and predict while reading. This builds interest and creativity.
7. Have children write their own books and stories.
8. Try acting out the story as you read it. This will help expand their reading comprehension, as well as making reading interesting and fun.
9. Make praises for small improvements. It is a new and scary situation as children learn to read.
10. Remember: Children learn to read K-3rd. Children read to learn 4th and up. Be patient; it pays off!

Learning Styles Giving Clues About Reading Styles From Ms. Armenta

Visual Learners:

1. These children thrive on large font, bright colors, and imaginative pictures.
2. Use a chalkboard or white board as a teaching aide.
3. Books with maps, illustrations, pictures, etc. will help to keep their interest.

Auditory Learners:

1. Children that learn through hearing and sounds are especially intrigued by reading aloud, books on tape, guest speakers, and singing songs along with books.
2. Try repetition and rhyming of sounds and words like in Dr. Seuss books.
3. Reading aloud or storytelling in groups is a wonderful way to captivate and motivate an auditory learner.

Linguistic Learners:

1. These children flourish through language.
2. Let them predict, discuss, debate, and summarize the reading material. Allow children to share their own stories, or ones they newly created.
3. Try playing word games in conjunction with their reading materials.

Kinesthetic Learners:

1. Children that learn through touching, doing, and experiencing need a hands-on approach to reading.
2. Have them read and act out plays, and try some character role-playing exercises.
3. Field trips to theatres or a setting similar to that in the book will help make the story a reality for the children.

Most learners can benefit from all the ideas listed above to stimulate them in different ways to reach the child's way and level of learning. This will also better prepare them for the real world in other areas that may be challenging to them. These strategies can start at a very young age, as early as the toddler stage if the child appears to be interested. Remember that the more stimulated your children are now, then the more confident, happy, and well-balanced adults they will become. So be sure to make reading a fun activity that they'll enjoy!

