

Ways to Improve Reading Fluency: Help Your Child Become a Fluent Reader

Reading fluency is one of the most important skills for a child to master in the early elementary years. Not only does a fluent reader make the transition to being a fluent writer much more easily than a non-fluent reader, but as students get older reading plays an important role in math, science and social studies, too. If you're concerned about your child's reading skills, here are more than 10 ways to increase reading fluency.

1. Read Aloud to Your Child to Improve Reading Fluency

Even if your child is old enough to read by himself, it's helpful for him to hear someone more practiced read to him. He'll get a better sense of rhythm, intonation and, if you pick a variety of different genres, will develop an appreciation for all types of books.

2. Create a Reading Area

Give your child a place to which she can go to be comfortable while she reads, one that is filled with her very own books. While it may not help with the technical components of fluency, it helps in building an overall appreciation for reading.

3. Work on Phonemic Awareness Skills

Many students have trouble with reading fluency because they have trouble understanding how the pieces of words (such as chunks, digraphs and blends) are manipulated to make new words.

4. Build Sight Word Vocabulary

Sight words, sometimes known as core words, are the foundation of a child's reading and writing skills. If he can't quickly recognize common words, your child is more likely to stumble as he tries to sound out everything he reads.

5. Paired reading

Paired reading can mean alternating sentences while you read with your child or reading aloud together. Just come up with a signal to indicate when your child wants to read a sentence by herself or is stuck on a word.

6. Echo Reading

Echo reading is a great strategy for children who have great technical reading skills, but for whom prosody is a problem. If your child struggles to read with expression, try reading a section and then having him “echo” you, using the same intonations and emphasis you used.

7. Pick Books Kids Can Relate To

Nothing gets a child more interested in a book than knowing that the character is having the same struggles or concerns that he is. Known as *bibliotherapy*, choosing books that can help children find solutions to problems they are facing can not only help build fluency, but also deal with issues like bullying and school refusal.

8. Invest in Audiobooks

Audiobooks (which many of us remember as being “books on tape”) are a fantastic way for children to follow along as someone else reads. Even better is the fact that your child can listen to her favorite book over and over again without you having to read it a million times!

9. Practice Critical Reading With Your Older Child

Fluency isn’t just about being able to recognize the words and read them expressively at a good pace. It’s also about understanding what you’ve read and being able to evaluate that information. Critical reading is a critical skill for third, fourth and fifth graders.

10. Look for Reading Problems

Though you may not like to admit it, sometimes a non-fluent reader is having trouble because of an underlying learning disability. If the strategies you’re trying to improve reading fluency doesn’t seem to be working, keep your eye out for other signs of reading problems.

11. Keep In Touch With Your Child’s Teacher

Parent teacher communication is a key element of student success, especially when it comes to reading. Your child’s teacher can tell you at what level he’s reading, what improvements he needs to make and give you suggestions for books to engage him at home.

