

What is fluency?



Reading fluently means reading text accurately, quickly, smoothly, and with good expression. The specific skills include accuracy in identifying words, ability to recognize words instantly, and the appropriate use of stress, pitch, and phrasing in reading text.

Why teach fluency?

- When a student is a fluent reader they can focus more of their energy on understanding what they have read. Fluency comes from being able to make meaning from the way words are chunked together.
- A child needs up to 12 to 14 contacts with a word before it is automatically recognized while reading.

What can I do to support or help my child?

- Read out loud with your child 3 to 4 times weekly. Parents can read to their children as little as 10-15 minutes at a time and still have an incredible impact on the development of a child's reading skills. Be sure to read with expression, pausing at the ends of thoughts and sentences. Talk about how the author tells you how the character is feeling by the words that are chosen, how the words are ordered, or the punctuation that comes in the middle and at the end of a sentence.

For example, the following sentence can be expressed different ways depending the way it is said:

I am not going to do that.
I am not going to do that.
I am not going to do that.

It is important to know which way to say the phrase and know how the author intended it. Does the author mean that I won't do it but someone else will? Or does the author mean that he refuses do it? Or the author refuses to do it but may do something else instead.

- Gently correct any errors the child makes. To correct your child, using a matter-of-fact tone of voice, draw the child's attention to the missing sounds. Have the child underline the word with their finger or trace the word before they try to reread it. If you think the child is going to miss the word again, say the word, have the child trace it, then start reading from the beginning of the sentence so the child can read the whole sentence with no mistakes.
- Read books, articles, or comics that are at your child's reading level.

...continued on back

- Have your child read the same book to you several times. Reading with expression develops in the same way one becomes a fluent driver, it takes lots of practice to be able to read with expression.
- Read a small part of the book to your child, and then have the child read the same part back to you. If you are having difficulty getting started take turns reading each sentence. Often the child will read more than one sentence once they get on a roll. Add humor by pointing out that the child took your turn.
- Echo read with your child. Have the child read with you, repeating your words as you point to the words in the book. As their confidence grows, children will start reading with their parents and begin to take the lead. When this happens, the parent should let the child signal when its time for the parent to stop reading. The child will continue to read while the parent listens. When the child makes a mistake, the parent should gently correct the error and begin reading with the child until the child signals a readiness to read alone.

References:

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LDA of Minnesota is the state affiliate of LDA of America, a non-profit organization of volunteers dedicated to identifying causes, promoting prevention of learning disabilities, and enhancing the quality of life for all individuals with learning disabilities and their families by encouraging effective identification and intervention, fostering research, and protecting their rights under law.