

What reading programs should I use?



What should I look for in an effective reading program?

Research has shown that the most effective reading programs contain the following components: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency.

Phonemic awareness involves being able to hear and identify sounds in different positions within a word, as well as being able to take apart words into individual sounds and put them back together.

Phonetic approaches to language learning deal with the relationship between written letters and their sounds. Material is introduced sequentially and gradually, beginning with individual letters and their sounds, progressing to combinations of letters and their sounds, and then to whole words. A phonics program breaks down the language into its smallest parts and shows how to put the parts together to form words.

Good reading instruction also includes building vocabulary so that students are able to communicate well, fluency instruction so that students can read smoothly, accurately, and with ease, and comprehension strategy training so that students are able to better understand what they read.

How do I recognize good reading instruction?

Good reading should result in a child making progress toward academic milestones. It is helpful to know what skills or benchmarks should be achieved at age or grade levels to determine whether a student is having developmental language difficulties.

Pre-school to Kindergarten instruction should include, rhyming, comparing sounds, pulling sounds apart, putting sounds together, and identifying the order or placement of sounds in a word.

Kindergarten instruction should include the teaching of letters and their sounds and the linkage between the two. Also, the writing of the child's name, as well as the writing of most letters individually, should be taught.

A first grader should be able to decode or sound out one syllable words, know word families, i.e. words that end in /at/ or /ite/ or /ing/. He/she should be able to accurately spell short, easy words, self-correct errors in decoding using surrounding letters and/or the context, and comprehend simple books.

When reading **a second grader** should be able to decode words with multiple syllables, begin to read quickly, smoothly, accurately and with expression.

A third grader should be able to read with fluency and comprehend third grade level texts. She/he should be able to use prefixes, suffixes and roots to gain meaning from what is read. She/he should be able to summarize main points and use a dictionary.

A fourth grader should be able to read to learn and read for pleasure.

What are some reading programs that incorporate these methods?



A reading program may incorporate a combination of methods or curricula to ensure that all five components are covered or addressed. The following are examples of programs that introduce, teach, and reinforce best practices in reading.

The Cognitive Approach *comprehension*

Kansas Strategies *comprehension, vocabulary*

Lindamood-Bell *phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency*

Project Read *phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency*

Reading Mastery *phonics, fluency*

Step-by-Step (LDA of Minnesota)

The SQR Method, Summarize, Question, Respond *comprehension*

Orton-Gillingham *phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency*

The Souday System (Winsor Corporation) *phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency*

The Wilson Reading System *phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency*

Where can I find out more about best practices in reading research and reading programs?

LDA of Minnesota, <http://www.ldaminnesota.org> or call 952-922-8374

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000) *National Reading Panel Reports Combination of teaching Phonics, Word Sounds, Giving Feedback on Oral Reading Most Effective Way to Teach Reading*. Web site: <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/new/releases/nrp.htm>.

Report of the National Reading Panel. 2000. *Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction*. Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service. www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrppubskey.cfm

McIntyre, Curtis W., Ph.D. and Pickering, Joyce S., LSH/CCC, MA. (1995)

Multisensory Structured Language Programs: Content & Principles of Instruction.

Web site: http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/reading/mssl-methods.html.

LDA of Minnesota

For more than 36 years, **Learning Disabilities Association of Minnesota** has been serving the needs of people of all ages at risk for learning disabilities or related learning difficulties by maximizing their potential so that they may lead more productive and fulfilled lives. Services include educational assessments, one-to-one and small group tutoring, consultations, family literacy activities, school-to-work transition programming, professional training, public education, and high-quality educational products.

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.