

Reading for Success

Help your struggling reader

If your child is one of millions of American youngsters with reading difficulties, don't panic. There are many things you can do to help. Have your child assessed by a pediatrician to rule out vision and hearing problems and by the school to determine the level of difficulty. Discuss with the teacher some ways you can help your struggling reader at home. Here are some ideas:

Set the stage

- **Get your child a library card** and lots of opportunities to use it. If your child is in charge of selecting books, that might be enough incentive for *wanting* to practice reading!
- **Give your child access** to interesting books. Look at your child's bookshelf. If it's been a long time since you've updated it, take a trip to the bookstore.
- **Look for books** that match your child's interests. Try a nonfiction book. Information books answer questions. They also help improve vocabulary.



challenging. (If it's too hard, your child may give up and stop trying.)

- **Stop occasionally to discuss the story.** Struggling readers often have trouble with comprehension, a very important reading skill. Talk about what the characters are doing and why. Ask "what if" questions.
- **Let your child listen** to recorded stories while following along in the book. Many children with reading difficulties read too slowly for stories to make sense, and so they get frustrated. Can't find audio versions of favorite books? Consider recording your own.

Stay involved

- **Offer comfortable guided reading.** Help your child review *sight* words. Build confidence by rereading familiar books together.
- **Let your child imitate your reading.** Choose an easier book. Read a few pages aloud to your child. Then take turns reading the same pages aloud. Finally, have your child read the pages to you. Offer help if your child gets stuck.
- **Remember that practice makes perfect.** Read together frequently. Make sure that what you read together isn't too

Be supportive

- **Do what you can** to make your home a reading- and writing-rich environment, but don't hesitate to ask for help.
- **Work closely with the teacher** to monitor your child's progress. Discuss changes she sees in your child's reading performance. Celebrate small successes.
- **Give positive feedback.** Don't compare your child's reading with that of more successful readers. Don't discuss reading difficulties in front of family members or friends. Deal with reading difficulties in private and with your child's teacher.

