

Fluency

What the skill is: Fluency is **ACCURACY and SPEED** while reading with good expression.

When we read fluently, we see the word “stop” but we do not even have to notice we are thinking about the letters and the sounds they make. Our brain quickly recognizes “stop.”

When a child is just learning to read, they are working to develop fluency (accuracy and speed) with letter names and the sounds those letters and letter combinations make, in addition to reading paragraphs fluently. The following terms describe different types of words.

Sight Words - words you have read so many times you don't even notice you are thinking about the individual sounds or letters. You can automatically read the words; you know them by sight.

High Frequency Words - words that occur very frequently in writing and are oftentimes the first words students memorize or learn by sight.

Decodable Words - words that can be “sounded out” using phonics.

Irregular Words - words that don't follow the common “rules” of phonics, for example:

- **of** which has a /v/ sound, instead of /f/ at the end
- **is** and **was** which have a /z/ sound at the end rather than /s/
- **done** which would typically have a long /ō/ sound because of the final silent **e** but has the /uh/ sound instead.

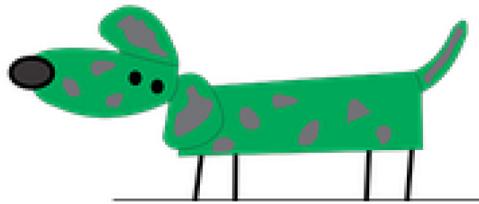
What it's not: Trying to get children to read faster and faster. There is no advantage to reading very fast for young children. There is, however, a red flag for children who read below a certain number of words per minute. Think about riding a bicycle and pedaling very, very slowly. The rider tips over because all the energy goes into balancing and they never get anywhere! The same happens when reading very slowly. The child is spending so much energy trying to decode each word, there isn't any energy left to think about what it means.

Why it's important: Fluency allows us to focus on the meaning of what we are reading.

Ways to help your child: Below are several strategies you can use to help your child improve their fluency. Most of them involve reading aloud or “out loud” so you and your child can hear the progress being made and catch AND CORRECT any errors they make.



Repeated Reading – Read it aloud, read it aloud again, read it a third time, either aloud or silently. The simple strategy of re-reading a sentence, paragraph, or whole book, increases accuracy, speed, and how much expression your child uses as they read. Help your child pay attention to how much better it sounds each time they re-read it. Reading to different audiences can really help, too. In addition to reading to you, encourage your child to read to visiting relatives, the family pet, their brothers and sisters, friends, and anyone else who will listen.



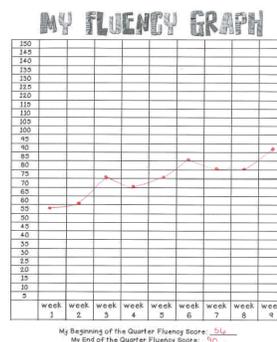
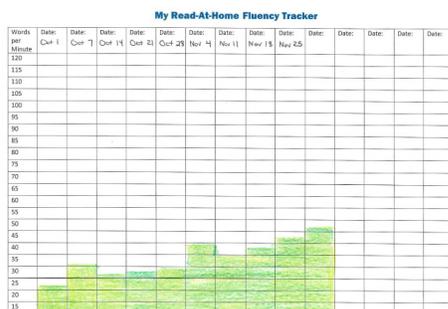
Choral Reading – Read it aloud with both of you reading at the same time. Having an expert reader reading along can help boost accuracy and speed. When possible, have your child re-read it alone after reading it with you.

Echo Reading – You read a sentence, then your child reads the same sentence.

Measure it – Another way to help your child improve their fluency is to use a timer to measure progress. Ask your child to read out loud for just one minute. Make a light pencil mark where they ended. Now ask them to read that same passage again, and set the timer for another minute. How much farther did they get? On the third try, how much more did they read? Was it more accurate? Was it easier to listen to? Did your child use more expression as they read it?



Chart It – While your child should practice reading fluently each day, you can help them chart their practice each week to see their improvement. Several charts are included in this pack. Your child can count the correct words they read and mark the chart.



Cloze Reading Scaffold – Follow the steps in this order:

1. You read part of the sentence.
2. Your child reads just the words you point to.
3. Then you both read it together.
4. Then your child re-reads the entire sentence.

Record it – You can record your child reading and allow them to listen to themselves. Encourage them to record it again to make it even better.

Ask for Books – Ask your child's teacher to send home more books that are at the correct level for your child to practice building fluency. They will be books that are not too challenging but still of interest to your child.

References:

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