

Best Practices for Supporting Grades 3 and Above

Students with Dyslexia in Grades 3 and above can display academic and social emotional characteristics similar to other students who have difficulty with reading. This resource is aimed to help educators working with older students who struggle with reading and literacy development.



SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF STRUGGLING READERS

- Weak foundation of basic reading skills that affect fluency and can ultimately affect reading comprehension
- Limited word attack skills, especially multisyllabic words (mul-ti-syl-lab-ic)
- Struggles to understand what information a dictionary entry can provide
- Limited vocabulary
- Poor spelling skills – often misspells multiple ways
- Takes longer with writing tasks
- Difficulty memorizing isolated facts

As a result students might also exhibit social emotional behaviors:

- Shame concerning lack of academic progress
- Guilt about not being able to keep up
- Low self-esteem about areas of weakness but also areas that were previously strengths
- Anxiety and depression
- Refusal to attend school or avoidance of class participation

For more information about research or terminology, see [The Science of Reading](#)

Use Effective, Evidence-based Classroom Strategies



In order for students to become independent readers, they need a balance of explicit instruction as well as opportunities to engage with texts to help them make sense of what they read.

Evidence-Based Strategies:

- Use [Explicit Instruction](#) of foundational literacy skills – develops a capacity to comprehend.
- Incorporate [Phonological Instruction](#) – supports sound-symbol correspondence.
- Practice Routine fluency – reading aloud is important for comprehension: [Sample 5-day Practice Routine](#).
- Model reading aloud – following the visual of the text helps students hear the corresponding sounds.
- [Multi-sensory Techniques](#) – using multiple modes helps students connect and process.
- [Word Morphology](#) lessons – help students break down words into parts (morphemes, roots, prefixes, suffixes) to make meaning and understand spelling patterns.
- Prep, Practice, and Perform – provide prior notice and opportunity to practice before asked to perform (read aloud).
- Provide vocabulary lessons prior to reading – helps make more meaning when reading.
- Read directions aloud to help clarify the task – teacher can also record directions.
- Allow extra time – students can show mastery without a time limit.
- Integrate videos into lectures – helps engage all learners.
- Provide reading books at the student's reading level – students need to feel successful but also need age-appropriate content: [Lexile - Find a book](#).

Use **close reading** strategies to help students build comprehension and interpret meanings. Here is a sample of tools:

- [K-W-L Chart](#) helps students connect reading to prior knowledge (K), be curious about learning more (W), and track what they learned (L).
- [Anchor Charts](#) are a visual reminder of important skills, strategies, or guiding questions
- [Annotation](#) helps students engage and interact with a text for a specific purpose as they make notes and identify important information by underlining/highlighting/color coding details
- [Graphic Organizers](#) can help students organize ideas and make connections
- [Chunking](#) breaks texts into smaller parts to help students independently comprehend it
- [Cloze Procedure](#) helps reinforce key ideas from passages. This technique omits key words and has students fill in the blanks as they read.
- [More Reading Strategies](#)

Social & Emotional Support



It is important to consider the emotional impact of being an older student who struggles with foundational reading skills.

- Encourage Advocacy – help students speak up about their needs.
- Set a Supportive Tone – be inclusive so students are more willing to ask for support.
- Set High Expectations - students want to feel believed in and also challenged.
- Share success stories – many famous and everyday people embrace and talk about their Dyslexia: [Dyslexia Success Stories](#).
- Focus on intellectual ability, not academic record.
- Be supportive rather than disciplinary (i.e., taking away recess).

Supports/Accommodations

Instruction and intervention should be first and foremost; however, sometimes supports and accommodations can be appropriately used in the classroom and with assessments.

- Use audiobooks to support access to grade-level curriculum.
- Allow Assistive Technology - support students using audio features, voice typing/dictation software for writing, or assistive apps for spelling and notetaking.
- Provide extended time for reading and writing, especially for assessments.
- Provide fewer test/homework problems that work on the same skill.
- Allow modified grading of spelling and grammar on writing assignments, if applicable (consider the purpose of the task).
- Print or record verbal step-by-step assignment directions or allow them to capture the directions by taking a picture or video.
- Provide Project-based learning options/alternatives (e.g., oral presentation, multisensory experiences).
- Provide a quiet place for studying and testing.
- Consider how common instructional practices compare to the end-of-year assessment so that students can be using the same supports all year, not just one time: [Smarter Balanced Supports and Practices Crosswalk](#).

Teaching Reading Handouts: *Interventions for Reading Fluency Grade 3+*

[Sound/Symbol Association & Phonetic Coding](#)

[Reading Fluency](#)

[Word Recognition/Automaticity](#)

[Reading Comprehension](#)