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 (multi-syllabic)
- 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](#)