



READING DIFFICULTIES CHECKLIST: 2ND GRADE+

This checklist outlines common signs that a child in second grade and beyond may need explicit reading support. These signs aren't a diagnosis, but they are important indicators that a student could benefit from targeted help. Intervening early is critical—acting now can prevent years of ongoing struggle and help close gaps before they become harder to remediate.

Problems in Speech:

- Mispronouncing long, unfamiliar, or complex words; breaking apart words incorrectly
- Speech that sounds halting or choppy, not smooth or flowing
- Using vague language - "*stuff*", "*thing*" or confusing words that sound alike: *tornado* instead of *volcano*, *humanity* instead of *humidity*, etc
- Needs time to respond orally when questioned
- Trouble remembering dates, names, telephone numbers, random lists; difficulty with rote memory; remembers concepts more easily than facts

Problems in Reading

- Unusually slow progress in building reading skills
- Lacks strategies to read new words
- Trouble reading new, unfamiliar words that must be sounded out; guesses wildly
- Inability to read small words - *to, that, am, so, for, from*
- Very afraid to read aloud
- Oral reading full of substitutions, omissions, mispronunciations;
- Oral reading that is choppy, labored, not smooth or fluent; lacks inflection
- Relies on context for understanding; understands words in context better than in isolation
- Substitutes words with the same meaning for words that are difficult to pronounce
- Disastrous spelling & difficulty with writing; can overshadow great ideas and imagination
- Trouble reading mathematics word problems
- Reading that is very slow, laborious, and tiring
- Trouble reading anything other than memorized words
- Lack of enjoyment in reading, avoidance of reading books, avoidance of reading for pleasure
- Reading accuracy improves with time, continues to lack fluency and is laborious

Other Important Factors

- Disproportionately poor performance on multiple choice or timed tests
- Homework that never seems to end; parents may be recruited as readers or scribes
- Messy handwriting
- Lowered self-esteem, with pain that is not always visible to others
- Has a family history of reading, spelling, writing or foreign language problems (i.e. dyslexia)
- Has problems learning a second language
- Difficulty memorizing multiplication tables or math facts, impacting math calculation & carrying out basic math operations.

Adapted from Shaywitz, S. (2005). *Overcoming Dyslexia* (2020 Edition): Completely Revised and Updated. Vintage.