

Guidelines for Effective Interventions

- **Conduct initial assessment to determine students' needs.**

Include more than one assessment for phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge, phonics (letter-sound correspondences), word reading, fluency, and comprehension.

- **Form groups of three to five students based on similar instructional needs.**

- **Provide targeted instruction several (three to five) times per week.**

Include reading skills that have the highest impact on learning to read: phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, phonics and word study, fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension.

Follow a systematic routine. Use clear, explicit, easy-to-follow procedures.

Sequence instruction so that easier reading skills are introduced before more complex ones.

Adjust and scaffold instruction in response to students' needs and to how quickly or slowly students are learning.

Include frequent and cumulative reviews of previously learned material.

- **Determine the readability of texts to ensure that students are reading texts at the appropriate level of difficulty.**

Independent level: Texts in which no more than approximately 1 in 20 words is difficult for the reader (*Accuracy level: 95 - 100%).

Instructional level: Texts in which no more than approximately 1 in 10 words is difficult for the reader. Students need instructional support from the teacher (*Accuracy level: 90 - 94%).

Frustrational level: Texts in which more than 1 in 10 words is difficult for the reader, or too difficult for students to read (*Accuracy level: Less than 90%).

*Reading accuracy levels vary from source to source. To calculate reading accuracy, divide the number of words read correctly by the total number of words read.

- **Match reading levels to the purpose for reading.**

Independent-level texts are appropriate if students are reading independently with little or no instructional support.

Instructional-level texts are appropriate for small-group instruction when teachers provide assistance before, during, and after reading.

- **Provide many opportunities for struggling readers to apply what they are learning as they read words, word lists, and sentences in texts.**

Incorporate decodable texts so students can practice decoding words that contain previously introduced phonics elements.

Have students practice reading words and texts at the appropriate level of difficulty (usually instructional level under the direction of the teacher).

Include the reading of word cards or word lists to increase word recognition fluency (often used with high-frequency and irregular words and words that contain previously taught letter-sound correspondences or spelling patterns).

Include comprehension instruction that introduces new vocabulary words and helps students to understand what they read and the stories and other texts they hear read aloud.

Incorporate graphic organizers and comprehension activities.

- **Include a writing component based on students' abilities.**

Dictate words and sentences that contain previously introduced phonics elements and irregular words. Students can apply what they are learning about letters and sounds as they spell words. (These activities stimulate phonemic awareness and knowledge of spelling patterns.)

Ask students to write as many words as they can in a specified time. This method can be used to monitor progress at the end of each session.

- **Involve parents and other caregivers so they can support their students' efforts by listening to them read and practice reading skills.**
- **Conduct ongoing progress monitoring to inform instruction and grouping.**

Adapted from Gunning, T. G. (2002). *Assessing and correcting reading and writing difficulties* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon; Morrow, L. M. (2001). *Literacy development in the early years: Helping children read and write* (4th ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon; Texas Governor's Business Council. (2000). *How do I know a good reading intervention when I see one?* [Brochure]. Austin, TX: Author; Torgesen, J. K., Alexander, A. W., Wagner, R. K., Rashotte, C. A., Voeller, K. K. S., & Conway, T. (2001). Intensive remedial instruction for children with severe reading disabilities: Immediate and long-term outcomes from two instructional approaches. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 34(1), 33–58.