

The Reading Corner 5th Issue

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What should my child be able to do in reading by the end of second grade?

Welcome to *The Reading Corner*. In previous issues we have been discussing what to do if your child has difficulty reading and how to form a team with your child's teacher and school. We have discussed what the term dyslexia means (difficulty with reading), the skills your child should know in first grade and commonly used terms you need to know as the advocate for your child. Last month several parents ask what can they do to help their child until reading improves? This was a great question and I am encouraged there is a strong interest in how to accommodate children who have difficulty in reading, by both parents and teachers. Because the school year is winding down I would like to review what children should be able to do by the end of second grade, and next month third grade.

By the end of second and third grades children should be increasingly able to figure out unknown words using their phonic systems. Children should not be reading simply by memorizing their words. The practice of teaching reading through memorization, with the exception of true sight words (words that do not follow the phonic rules) should no longer be part of the classroom in second and third grade. Teachers may use the practice of re-reading for fluency but this system is not intended to teach memorization. Children should be aware of how to re-read for pronunciation and the meaning of new words in sentences, while re-checking the phonic skills they used. As a parent, check to make sure your child's phonic system is in place and that there is knowledge of prefixes, suffixes, and root and base words by the end of second grade.

By the end of second grade we do want children to read fluently. When children re-read to themselves, and out-loud to someone they will improve fluency, phrase reading for meaning, and help to develop a confidence system. Re-reading does develop fluency. Often you will hear your child's teacher speak about timing the reading, and re-reading, and how to calculate the words per minute the child can

read accurately. Although this is common practice in the classroom for the development of fluency, and is believed the best method, it is not the only method.

Then the second grade student is not responding to the timing exercise it may be an indication that the student cannot read using a phonic system, with automaticity. Not reading fluently may also be an indication that the student is still memorizing words to read. These facts are often over looked in the classroom. Timing a student can also cause some students to freeze and do poorly on the examination. Timing can actually hinder some students from becoming fluent readers. What is important to remember is that students do need to become fluent readers to become confident, and there are several different ways to encourage the improvement of this skill. The skill for fluency improvement should be chosen to fit the child's individual needs.

The following information was produced by the RMC Research Corporation in cooperation with the National Institute for Literacy, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This publication is available under the heading of "The Partnership for Reading; Bringing Scientific Evidence to Learning." I believe this particular research to be valid and is an excellent check list that can be used by parent and teacher, in measuring the effectiveness of the classroom instruction during grade two. The list could certainly have additions but stands as solid ground to be used as a foundation to advancing reading. (Look for the list for what a child can do at the end of third grade in the next Reading Corner issue.)

What Children should be able to do by the end of second grade?

Phonics and word recognition

By the end of second grade, a child ...

- Can read a large number of regularly spelled one and two-syllable words (following the phonic rules)
- Figures out how to read a large number of words with more than two syllables
- Uses knowledge of phonics to sound out unfamiliar words
- Accurately reads many sight words

Reading

By the end of second grade, a child ...

- Reads and understands a variety of second grade level fiction and nonfiction books
- Knows how to read for specific purposes and to seek answers to specific questions
- Answers “how,” “when,” “where,” “why,” and “what-if” questions
- Interprets information for diagrams, charts, and graphs
- Recalls information, main ideas, and details after reading
- Compares and connects information read in different books and articles
- Takes part in creative responses to stories, such as dramatizations of stories and oral presentations

Spelling and writing

By the end of second grade, a child ...

- Pays attention to how words are spelled
- Correctly spells words he has studied
- Spells a word the way it sounds if she doesn’t know how to spell it
- Writes for many different purposes
- Writes different types of compositions (for example, stories, reports, and letters)
- Makes good judgments about what to include in his or her writing
- Takes part in writing conferences and then revises and edits what he or she has written
- Pays attention to the mechanics of writing (for example, spelling capitalization, and punctuation) in the final versions of compositions

Vocabulary

By the end of second grade, a child ...

- Wants to learn new words and share those words at school and home
- Uses clues from the context to figure out what words mean
- Uses knowledge of word parts such as prefixes, suffixes and root words to figure out word meanings
- Increases vocabulary through the use of synonyms and antonyms
- Can use different parts of speech correctly, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs
- Learns more new words through independent reading
- Explores and investigates topics of interest on his or her own

The RMC research indicates, “It is critical that children are up to reading speed by the end of third grade. Children who fail to make good progress in

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reading by the time they enter fourth grade are likely to have trouble in the upper grades and to drop out of school before graduating.

Although this list is for second grade it is the foundation for third grade skills. It is also important to remember that not all children develop at the same rate and that children do learn differently, however, you can depend on the list as an indicator as to what has been taught in the classroom and what has been mastered as a skill. As a parent you should see evidence that the entire list above is close to being mastered by the end of second grade. Check off areas that you feel your child has mastered. Then, consider working on the skills that have not been mastered over the summer. Remember that research indicates your child should be able to demonstrate all these skills by the end of the second grade.

If after you have reviewed this list and your child is missing many of the necessary skills for third grade consider contacting a private learning specialist for help. The more information you have the more empowered you are to help your child. Government research has determined that at least 20% of children need highly individualized programs in order for them to be successful and meet their grade level goals. Some children need one-on-one instruction. The learning specialist will work with you, your child and your school to develop a specialized program where you will see progress. You will watch your child gain self esteem become a successful and independent student for the next grade.

If you have additional questions about the content of this month's *The Reading Corner* please contact me at leareducationalcenter@juno.com or call me at the Lear Educational Center at 610-252-0965. We will make every attempt to answer all questions submitted. Look for more information about reading and related subjects in the next issue of *The Reading Corner* or visit on line for information and links about reading issues at <http://leareducationalcenter.com>. Thank you so much for your interest in your child's reading development. Reading is the primary means to learning and education. Let's all help to see all children reach their full potential while supporting learning and education through the advancement in reading.