

Does My Child Have a Reading Problem?

By Carole Richards

In my business, we receive many calls from parents of struggling readers. Here are some clues to why a child is a poor reader.

My child doesn't understand what they read.

Reason 1: The child cannot read all the big words effortlessly. This is knowing what the words say, not what they mean. Here's a home test. Have your child read a decent size paragraph in a grade level book. If they misread five+ words they aren't reading effortlessly.

Reason 2: They don't understand what they are reading and/or can't infer the book's meaning. Often the child has a lower ability or is on the Autism spectrum. *Most average ability children, even those with a learning disability, can understand what they read if they can read the words well.*

My child likes to listen to books.

If your child doesn't like to read, but listens to books and understands what is read. This is another clue that they can't read *effortlessly*.

My child doesn't like to read.

Well, if your child can't read well, it isn't much fun.

My child can't focus.

Some children do have attention issues, but some children day dream or lose focus because they can't read well. Most of us would daydream if we couldn't read well, but all day every day we were required to read things. My mind would go to a happier place!

My child is a terrible speller

This is not on a spelling test; rather it is seen when writing something. Good spellers can write the words they want to use almost as effortlessly as they read.

My child isn't motivated

Every child wants to be successful in school. If your child is not doing their work, could they be a poor reader? Of course, there are other reasons, but poor reading is a cause.

My child has good grades but hates to read

Good grades doesn't always equate to good reading skills. A child can work hard in school and be a poor reader. By middle school or before, it becomes difficult to sustain good grades with poor reading skills.

What is a good reader and how is the U.S. doing?

A good reader has broken the reading code. They know:

- Sounds in little words.
- How to break big words into pieces (syllable)
- Rules for each syllable

This method is called multi-sensory systematic phonics. Some students break the code but don't know the rules. Many students can't break the reading code and read poorly.

Since 1992, the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) finds 9% of fourth graders and 4% of eighth graders read at the advanced level. College students should all read at the advanced level to be successful learners.

So, you decide. Does your child have a reading problem?

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