



# FLUENCY

- Fluency is: accuracy in decoding; automaticity in word recognition; appropriate emphasis (red bandana); pitch (She's frightened. ! ?); and phrasing (chunking into meaning units— The young man the jungle gym.).
- Part of the development from "learning to read" to "reading to learn."
- If you cannot recognize words automatically, your comprehension will be impaired. If you don't understand it you won't want to read it. It's a little bit of a Catch 22: in order to read fluently, need to comprehend.
- Fluent readers are often reading at their instructional/independent level. Struggling readers are often reading at their frustration level. One quick way to assess appropriate reading level is 5 Finger Rule: 1 and 2 are easy; 3 is instructional; 4 is challenge; 5 is difficult/frustration.
- To become more fluent, students need to practice, practice, practice with a wide range of text at the instructional level (at least 85% accuracy).

## ACTIVITIES TO TRY AT HOME

1. Assisted Reading: Child chooses book at appropriate level. Parent and child read together. When child is ready to read alone, uses non-verbal signal. Parent joins in when child has difficulty and continues to read until child signals again. (Impress method: read into left ear, slightly louder and faster than child.) Child reads with finger under the text. Try to read for 15 minutes a day five times a week. (One study showed gains of nearly a year, after 12-13 weeks of assisted reading practice.)
2. Echo Reading: Parent reads a phrase, sentence, or paragraph. Child echoes. Child must be following text with finger, to insure reading not mimicking. Reverse roles on texts that child can read with some fluency.
3. Repeated Reading: Find a passage of 50-500 words. Read with child. Have child practice alone. Reread several times with child, modeling fluency. If appropriate, time child at the beginning, middle, and end. Celebrate improvement. Might want to tape record finally reading.

$$\frac{\text{\# of words read correctly}}{\text{\# of seconds read}} \times 60 = \text{words correct per minute (wcpm)}$$

(Repeated reading helps with fluency, but it also helps with comprehension. Adults say it's the number one strategy they use to understand text. Children often think rereading is cheating.)

4. Books on CDs: King County Library has picture books and chapter books on CDs. Only valuable for fluency if child is reading with the tape. Might take some time for child to learn how to find place, if falls behind. Work towards child reading without the CD.
5. Closed-Caption TV: When children are watching television, closed-captioning should be activated along with sound. For older children who know how to read but are lazy, turn the volume off and the captioning on.
6. Real-Life Reading: Whenever possible, find ways to have your child read to you; for example: recipes, the weather report in the newspaper, etc.