

"EARLY SIGNS OF READING ROADBLOCKS"

by:

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Reading is a lifelong beneficial skill that opens one's mind into the different horizons of reality and fantasy. This skill is acquired as early as a child begins to produce sounds and recognize the surrounding environment, while the comprehension develops progressively, as well. This ability is one of the many determining factors of a person's likelihood to succeed in the later years of life.

However, this ability does not develop as smoothly as it sounds. Children who struggle with reading often face additional challenges, such as difficulties with writing, spelling, fluency, and comprehension. In addition to receiving low grades, reading difficulties can cause stress and frustration in students, which we know can have an equal impact on their success as any other learning skill. (Oxford Learning, 2018) Thus, difficulties in reading causes detrimental domino effects starting from childhood extending up to adulthood in different aspects of one's course of life.

While most parents assume that each child undergo different pace of learning and development, is it likewise beneficial to be able to determine the early signs of reading difficulties for a timely intervention and support that can prevent the delay or hindrance of the learning. Early involvement can save a lot of time and fall backs in the part of the learner and the parents as well. (Nermeen E El Nokali 1, 2011)

With reference to this notion, what are the red flags to watch for, to determine a child experiencing reading difficulty?

According to National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, (2024) the most common sign to watch out is that they easily get distracted. A child experiencing reading struggles may move away their attention from the reading material, effortlessly. They do not show interest and often times, abandon the reading tasks and assignments. This is due to the fact that they do not understand what they are doing and what they are reading causing them to get bored and eventually turn their attention elsewhere. In relation to this, it takes longer time than usual to finish either a writing or reading activity, or worst, do not accomplish the task at all. (Pilat, 2024)

Another significant sign is displaying anxiety about reading. They are afraid of reading alone or altogether. They have the preconceived idea in their mind that they cannot do it, or they do not understand, even before they start reading. This scenario can be brought about by negative previous experience relating to the same activity. The encounter of difficulty, embarrassment, and fear becomes a cycle which ends up causing deeper sense of fear to the learner. (Academic Transformations, 2020)

In addition, poor readers may exhibit lack of fluency in sounding out words and sentences, based from Villani (2020). Frequent pauses and lack of expressions in tone are great indicators for this strain. They show high level of hesitations and uncertainty upon production of sounds. As a result, a child encounters problem understanding what was just read which compromises their comprehension at the same time.

Aside from what is mentioned, word recognition skill is also lagging behind. There are tendencies to misread words that are similarly looking. They get easily confused on the sounds of certain letters and end up pronouncing it the wrong way. At some cases, omission, substitution or even skipping is their strategy to get pass through a word. (Linda Farrell, 2024)

Lastly, which is most evidently a warning sign is that, a child is below the reading level expected from his or her actual age. When a learner is always behind the reading capacity

of his or her peers or classmates in general, this should be taken seriously. Knowing that a child naturally progresses and develops, this goes with reading abilities. As one ages, they are expected to advance and increase the level of difficulty they can accomplish in terms of reading, writing and comprehension. (Scholastic Parents Staff, 2022)

Parents and educators, as a primary stakeholders involved in the lives of a child or learner, knowing these indicators and doing something about them can help and save them from greater disadvantages and drawbacks both in childhood and mature years in life. According to ASHA (American Speech Language Hearing Association, 2021), childhood is a period of fast growth and development. The best time to intervene is in the early years because the brain is at its most adaptable phase during this time. The abilities youth acquire today serve as the foundation for their future education, success in school, in social situations, and in the workplace.

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