

WHEN READING FEELS LIKE A CHORE: EXPLORING THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF READING CHALLENGES

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Reading challenges, once primarily considered a cognitive difficulty, are now increasingly recognized as a significant source of emotional distress, particularly among young people. (Ohad Nachshon 1, 2020) In a realistic comparison, imagine waking up every day to go to work feeling inadequate and unsatisfied. A job where your supervisor constantly tells you that your performance was below average, resulting for you to feel incompetent while you fight daily to accomplish basic goals. Whereas most adults would leave such a toxic workplace, children, in their case, are forced to stay being employed in the work of learning how to read.

Struggling with reading can deeply impact a child's emotional health, often leading to feelings of frustration, embarrassment, and inadequacy (Reading Rockets, 2024). When a child who struggles with decoding words or comprehending texts, he or she may feel embarrassed in a classroom setting, especially during reading aloud activities. If they are frequently asked to read in front of the class and stumble over words, they might begin to feel inadequate compared to their peers, reinforcing a negative self-image. Over time, this sense of failure can erode a child's self-esteem and in worst possible cases, discourage them from engaging in school activities (American Psychological Association, 2020).

Also, a child may experience frustration when they can't keep up with assignments or are unable to understand the same reading materials that their friends are enjoying. In a classroom where reading is essential to academic success, they might feel disconnected or even isolated, which can lead to social withdrawal (Sorice, 2018). These emotional

struggles can extend beyond the classroom, affecting relationships with friends and family. For instance, a child who dreads homework because it involves reading tasks may become increasingly anxious or exhibit behavior changes such as irritability or avoidance.

In addition, as mentioned by Dent (2022) children who struggle with literacy may feel too much pressure to reach academic standards, particularly in reading. With frequent tests and reading milestones that pupils must meet, schools frequently highlight reading as a critical skill. This continual pressure to perform can easily become stressful for a child who is struggling. A child may feel inferior or left behind if they can't keep up with classmates who seem to pick up reading quickly (As They Grow, 2024). This disparity can cause kids to worry about their development, especially if they see that their peers are making progress or getting recognition for their reading skills while they might get more constructive criticism.

Moreover, the stress increases as they get more and more separated from their classmates. Fearing criticism or mockery, a child may be anxious about how they perform on tests or when reading in class. The child's progress may be further hampered by avoidance behaviors brought on by this fear, such as refusing to participate in reading activities completely. The psychological toll of attempting—and frequently failing—to live up to scholastic expectations can lead to feelings of hopelessness and loneliness. It can be more difficult for the youngster to catch up or restore confidence if they have a negative attitude about learning and school as a result of this ongoing cycle of stress, self-doubt, and frustration (Watson, 2022)

However, teachers and parents must concentrate more in developing supportive environments that foster the cognitive and emotional well-being of struggling readers as understanding of the emotional consequences of reading difficulties rises (Emir Feridun Çalışkana, 2022). These children need assistance in overcoming their emotions like irritation and self-doubt by providing them with empathy, encouragement, and specialized support.

This all-encompassing method not only improves literacy but also restores self-worth and confidence. Children are more inclined to take chances, read, and progressively form a good relationship with learning when they feel understood and emotionally encouraged (Kelly, 2015). This lays the foundation for future academic and personal development.

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