

How can I tell if my child is reading fluently?

A simple way to know if your child is reading fluently is to listen to him/her read grade level text aloud. Have your child read a paragraph from his/her social studies, science or reading book. As your child reads consider the following:

- How many words does he/she struggle with?
- How easily is he/she sounding out an unknown word?
- Is he/she reading with expression? (for example, pausing at commas, periods, etc.)
- Can he/she retell the story or summarize what the paragraph or story was about?

Children who have strong word recognition skills and can quickly use word attack strategies when coming upon an unknown word are able to read grade level text at an appropriate rate for that grade.

Additional ways to help a child read fluently:

- Model fluent reading. Provide opportunities when your child can hear you read aloud. Be sure to read with expression, pausing appropriately at punctuation marks and changing voice for characters.
- When having your child practice reading aloud, help your child choose books at his/her independent reading level. Use the 5-finger rule as a guide. This means that a child shouldn't struggle with more than 5 words on a page.
- When listening to your child read, when he/she comes to an unknown word, wait 5 seconds to allow him/her to use word attack strategy skills to figure out the word. If you have to provide the word for your child, be sure to have him/her repeat the word aloud while pointing to the word in text.
- Whether your child read to you or you read to your child, be sure to talk about what was read. Asking open ended questions such as, "What did you think of ...?", "How would you feel if...?", "What do you think might happen if?", is better than asking questions that require a simple one word answer.