

# **Educator's Guide**

## **Identifying What Works for Struggling Readers**

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## In this guide

Overview .....	3
Background .....	4
Goals of the Review .....	4
Review Methods.....	5
Key Findings.....	5
Findings by Category.....	6
Cross-Cutting Issues.....	10
Recommendations.....	12
Program Ratings.....	13
Full Report.....	27
Glossary.....	27
References.....	27

## Overview

This guide summarizes *Effective Programs for Struggling Readers: A Best Evidence Synthesis*, a research review conducted by Johns Hopkins University's Center for Research and Reform in Education. The purpose of the review was to evaluate the achievement outcomes of alternative approaches for struggling readers in grade K-5:

- one-to-one tutoring
- small group tutorials
- classroom instructional process approaches
- instructional technology

Study inclusion criteria for the review included the use of randomized or well-matched control groups, study duration of at least 12 weeks, and the use of valid measures independent of treatments. A total of 96 studies met these criteria.

The key findings of the review were as follows:

- One-to-one tutoring works. Teachers are more effective as tutors than teaching assistants or volunteers, and an emphasis on phonics greatly improves tutoring outcomes.
- Although one-to-one phonetic tutoring for first graders is highly effective, effects last into the upper elementary grades only if classroom interventions continue beyond this initial period.
- Small group tutorials can be effective, but are not as effective as one-to-one instruction by teachers or paraprofessionals.
- Classroom instructional process approaches, especially cooperative learning and structured phonetic models, have strong effects for low achievers (as well as other students).
- Traditional instructional technology programs have little impact on reading.

Taken together, the key findings of the review support a strong focus on improving classroom instruction followed by targeted, phonetic tutoring for students who continue to experience difficulties.

## Background

The importance of getting children off to a good start in reading cannot be overstated. In the elementary grades, success in school is virtually synonymous with success in reading, and children without strong reading skills by middle school are headed for disaster. Children who fail to read in the early grades incur so many costs to the education system – in special education, remediation, grade repetition, delinquency, and ultimate dropout – that even very expensive interventions can be justified on cost-effectiveness grounds alone, while at the same time preventing damage to young peoples’ lives.



Further, reading failure is not distributed randomly, but is concentrated among schools serving many disadvantaged, minority, and limited English proficient children. It is in the early elementary grades where the gap in performance between children of different races first appears, and this gap is perhaps the most important policy issue in education in the U.S.

On the fourth grade National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2007), 43% of White children achieved at the “proficient” level, but only 14% of African American, 17% of Hispanic, and 8% of American Indian children scored at this level. Effective reading programs are important for children of all backgrounds, but are especially important for disadvantaged children, minority children, and for children with learning disabilities, who particularly depend on school to achieve success.

Because of the importance of ensuring success in reading for all children, the policy focus on the problem, and the costs involved, it is especially important to understand which types of programs are most likely to have a strong and lasting impact on the reading success of struggling children.

## Goals of the Review

The main goal of the struggling readers review was to evaluate the effectiveness of various programs intended to help struggling readers in grades K-5. However, the review also addressed broader questions. For example, what are the long-term impacts of early intervention? And can small group interventions be as effective as one-to-one tutoring?

The review also evaluated the importance of phonics and phonological awareness in reading interventions, how to build on success in the early years to maintain gains into middle school, and how improved classroom programs and technology might contribute to the success of struggling readers.

## Review methods

An exhaustive search for potentially relevant research considered hundreds of published and unpublished articles. The review included studies from all countries, but the results had to be available in English. Studies also had to meet the following criteria:

- Schools or classrooms using each program had to be compared to randomly assigned or well-matched control groups.
- Study duration had to be at least 12 weeks.
- Outcome measures had to be assessments of the reading content being taught in all classes (for example, standardized tests or state assessments).

The review placed particular emphasis on studies in which schools, teachers, or students were assigned at random to experimental or control groups.

Outcomes of individual studies are expressed in the review as effect sizes, the proportion of a standard deviation by which the experimental group out-performed the control group (after adjusting for any pretest differences). Effect sizes of +0.20 or more are generally considered educationally significant (see glossary).

## Key findings

A total of 96 studies met the review's inclusion criteria. Key findings were as follows:

- One-to-one tutoring works. Teachers are more effective as tutors than teaching assistants or volunteers, and an emphasis on phonics greatly improves tutoring outcomes.
- Although one-to-one phonetic tutoring for first graders is highly effective, effects last into the upper elementary grades only if classroom interventions continue beyond this initial period.

- Small group tutorials can be effective, but are not as effective as one-to-one instruction by teachers or paraprofessionals.
- Classroom instructional process approaches, especially cooperative learning and structured phonetic models, have strong effects for low achievers (as well as other students).
- Traditional instructional technology programs have little impact on reading.

## Findings by category

The review grouped reading interventions into six categories: one-to-one tutoring by teachers, one-to-one tutoring by paraprofessionals and volunteers, small group tutorials, classroom instructional process approaches, classroom instructional process programs with tutoring, and instructional technology.

Findings from each category were as follows:

### 1. One-to-one tutoring by teachers

One-to-one teaching from qualified teachers and reading specialists was found to be very effective for struggling readers. It is the most expensive solution, but the expense may be justified if it can make a substantial difference to children at a critical point in their reading development and therefore reduce later needs for special education or remediation.

*Reading Recovery* is by far the most widely researched and widely used tutoring program in the world. Originally developed in 1985 in New Zealand by Marie Clay, *Reading Recovery* provides extensive training, observation, and feedback to qualified teachers, who provide daily 30-minute lessons to the lowest 20–30% of children in their first years of elementary school until they are reading at the expected level for their age. In general, teachers work with about four children during half of each school day and teach a normal class for the other half of the day. A *Reading Recovery* session involves re-reading a familiar book, independent reading of a text at the child's



level, teaching of letter knowledge, composing and writing a sentence, re-constructing a cut-up sentence, and introducing a new book.

The books are leveled readers with predictable text. Over the years, *Reading Recovery* has added more of an emphasis on phonics and decoding skills. Teacher training for *Reading Recovery* involves about 75 contact hours and includes live observations through a one-way glass screen and feedback from expert teacher leaders. The training takes place over an entire school year concurrent with practice with children.

Across all 19 qualifying studies of one-to-one tutoring programs, the overall weighted mean effect size was +0.38. Across eight studies specifically of *Reading Recovery*, the weighted mean effect size was only +0.23. Although the outcomes for *Reading Recovery* were positive, they were less so than might have been expected. It is possible that the current form of *Reading Recovery* is more effective than those evaluated in the 1980's and '90's due to an increased emphasis on phonics. Indeed, the only qualifying study of *Reading Recovery* recent enough to involve the newer form of the program found substantial positive effects. However, long-term follow-up studies up to five years after tutoring do not find continuing positive effects.

In the years since *Reading Recovery* was introduced, many other one-to-one tutoring programs with a phonetic emphasis have been developed and evaluated. These include programs such as *Auditory Discrimination in Depth*, *Early Steps/Howard Street Tutoring*, *Reading Rescue*, and *Targeted Reading Intervention*. The 11 studies of these newer programs had a weighted mean effect size of +0.60.

## 2. One-to-one tutoring by paraprofessionals and volunteers



One-to-one tutoring by certified teachers is expensive, and in high-poverty communities with shortages of teachers, allocating qualified staff to small numbers of children may be hard to justify. For those reasons, many schools have long used paraprofessionals or volunteers as tutors, usually with materials specifically designed for this purpose.

The effects seen for paraprofessionals as tutors using structured and intensive programs pose a real challenge to the idea that only certified teachers can be effective tutors. The 11 studies of tutoring by paraprofessionals included in this review

showed an overall effect size of +0.38, which is higher than the mean for *Reading Recovery*, although much lower than the effects for phonetic tutoring by teachers (+0.50). What these findings imply is that schools might use a mix of teachers and paraprofessionals as tutors, using the qualified teachers as leaders and to work with the most difficult children.

Effect sizes for volunteer tutors averaged only +0.16, but excluding two studies in which tutoring was given only once or twice a week, the mean for structured, phonetic programs was +0.50.

### 3. Small group tutorials



The most common form of supplementary teaching for struggling readers is additional teaching in small groups, typically 30–45 minutes daily. Small group tutorials are potentially more cost-effective than one-to-one tutoring from teachers, because several children are taught at the same time, and the group setting creates possibilities for children to learn from each other as well as from the teacher. On the other hand, small group teaching can simply offer more of the same type of teaching that has

already failed to work in the classroom. Furthermore, it can be difficult to coordinate with normal lessons, and does not allow teachers to tailor teaching to students' needs as much as one-to-one instruction does.

A total of 20 studies evaluated 18 different models of small group tutorials. Sixteen of these studies used random assignment to conditions. The overall mean effect size was +0.31.

It is important to note that the studies that met the inclusion criteria were all named programs with extensive training, materials, and other supports, as well as a strong emphasis on phonics. Findings from such programs cannot be assumed to apply to run-of-the-mill small group pullouts.

### 4. Classroom instructional process approaches – changing the way the teacher teaches

One potential solution for many struggling readers is to adapt the way that teachers conduct their normal lessons. Indeed, similar reviews on beginning reading programs and elementary reading programs have shown that classroom teaching process programs were the most effective approaches for children in general. Moreover, the inclusion of various forms of cooperative learning and phonics-oriented class programs could be particularly beneficial for students who

would otherwise have difficulty in learning to read. Of course, the use of effective classroom strategies does not preclude individually targeted interventions for the (hopefully) small number of children who may still need them.

The effect sizes across 16 studies of classroom instructional process programs were very positive for students at the lowest performance levels in their classes. The weighted mean effect size was +0.56, similar to the findings for one-to-one phonetic tutoring.

These effects were markedly more positive for low achievers than they were for students on average. Eight of the 16 studies involved forms of cooperative learning (*CIRC*, *PALS*, and same-age tutoring), and the mean for those studies was +0.58. Other particularly promising effects were found for programs that utilize structured, systematic, and phonetic approaches to reading instruction: *Direct Instruction*, *Project Read*, *RAILS*, and *Precision Teaching*.

### **5. Classroom instructional process programs with tutoring**

This category includes research on a single program, *Success for All*, which provides extensive school staff training and materials to improve all aspects of school organization and functioning. *Success for All* focuses in particular on those aspects relating to reading, and also provides tutoring to struggling children, mostly in first grade. The classroom interventions use a structured, fast-paced approach with a strong emphasis on cooperative learning, phonics, meta-cognitive skills, and frequent assessment. Parent involvement and interventions for behavior and other non-academic problems are also emphasized. In contrast to one-to-one tutoring programs such as *Reading Recovery* – which provide intensive tutoring during first grade, but no intervention afterwards – *Success for All* continues to provide classroom-level interventions (though not tutoring) throughout elementary school.



The weighted mean effect size for the lowest achievers in *Success for All* across nine qualifying studies was +0.55, similar to the effect size for phonetic tutoring programs. Furthermore, most of the *Success for All* studies provided the program over a period from three to six years, and generally found stable or increasing effect sizes over the years. This is in contrast to the findings of long-term follow-ups of one-to-one tutoring alone without classroom interventions after tutoring.

## 6. Instructional Technology

Over the past 30 years, one of the most common solutions for students who are struggling to learn to read is to give them computer-assisted instruction software. Modern instructional technology (IT) programs adapt to children's specific needs and give them activities with graphics and exciting elements that can supplement normal classroom teaching. However, previous reviews of research on primary IT applications in reading found few positive effects.

Across 14 qualifying studies (five randomized), IT had minimal impacts on the attainment of struggling readers. The weighted mean effect size was only +0.09.

## Cross-Cutting Issues

### The Importance of Phonics

Across all categories, almost all successful programs have a strong emphasis on phonics. One-to-one tutoring programs in which teachers were the tutors had a much more positive weighted mean effect size (+0.69 in nine studies) if they had a strong phonetic emphasis. One-to-one tutoring programs with less of an emphasis on phonics, specifically *Reading Recovery* and *TEACH*, had a weighted mean effect size of +0.23.

### Long-Term Effects of Tutoring

A key part of the argument for intensive one-to-one tutoring for children struggling to read in the early years of elementary school is that one-to-one tutoring does not only bring most struggling readers up to their reading age level, but it also creates confident readers from then on. The cost-effectiveness argument for very expensive programs such as *Reading Recovery* makes the case that the expense is justified by reductions in the need for remedial services or retentions in later years.

Surprisingly, few long-term follow-ups of the outcomes of early tutoring have been done, but the existing evidence does not support the contention that successful early tutoring has long-lasting effects. The best study of these long-term outcomes was reported by Hurry & Sylva in 2007. The study followed six- and seven-year-olds in London who received *Reading Recovery*. At the end of their tutoring year, the *Reading Recovery*-tutored children scored substantially better than a matched group of children who were not tutored (ES=+0.85). However, a year later, at age eight, the effect size dropped to +0.40, and then to +0.15 at age ten.

In contrast, numerous three- to six-year longitudinal studies have found continuing positive effects for *Success for All* over time. The comparison of these longitudinal studies suggests that tutoring in the early years of school can have substantial and lasting effects if the tutoring is followed up with improvements in teaching throughout elementary school.

### **Teachers vs. Paraprofessionals and Volunteers as Tutors**

The cost of having qualified teachers tutoring struggling readers is prohibitive for many schools, so tutoring is often provided by paraprofessionals. But can paraprofessionals do as well as teachers?

The outcomes of this review suggest that paraprofessionals can obtain good results with struggling readers, with a mean effect size of +0.38 in 11 studies. For volunteers, it was +0.16 in seven studies (but excluding two studies in which volunteers tutored only once or twice a week, the mean was +0.50).

The overall effects for paraprofessionals was similar to those found for all studies of one-to-one tutoring by teachers (ES=+0.38). However, almost all of the paraprofessional tutoring studies involved programs with a strong phonetic emphasis, so a better comparison is between phonetic tutoring by teachers (ES=+0.69) and phonetic tutoring by paraprofessionals (ES=+0.38).

### **One-to-One vs. Small Group Tutorials**

For many years, the dominant form of assistance for struggling readers has been small group tutorials, in which students are taught in groups of two or more.

The results of the review suggest that small group tutorials with a strong phonetic emphasis and extensive training and follow-up can indeed be effective for struggling readers (ES=+0.31), but the effects are less than those for phonetic tutoring by teachers (ES=+0.50) and similar to the effect size for tutoring by teaching assistants (ES=+0.38).

It could be assumed that small group tutoring is the more cost-effective option. However, it is important to note that most small group tutoring programs provide 30-40 minutes of daily teaching all year, while one-to-one tutoring is usually given less time per day and for a few months, so differences in teacher time per child are not as large as they might appear. This implies that schools should try to arrange one-to-one tutoring for students having the greatest difficulty. There may also be a broader set of children with milder difficulties for whom small group tutorials are sufficient.

## Classroom Instructional Process Approaches vs. Tutoring

One of the most surprising findings in the review is the effectiveness of classroom instructional process approaches. The review's findings suggest that it is critical to focus first on core classroom teaching strategies – using methods that improve reading performance for the whole class, but particularly for low achievers. These programs work well with all students, but the effect sizes for the lowest-achieving children are about twice those reported for students in general.

The average effect size across 16 studies of instructional process programs was +0.56 for students in the lowest performing segment of their classes, similar to the effect sizes found for one-to-one phonetic tutoring. Most of these instructional process programs are forms of cooperative learning with a strong focus on phonics (e.g., *CIRC* and *PALS*), and other structured phonetic models (e.g., *Direct Instruction*, *RAILS*, and *Project Read*).

These findings do not imply that tutoring is unnecessary, but rather that professional development for classroom teachers in proven methods should be a major emphasis in helping struggling readers. There will always be individual children who continue to struggle despite excellent classroom teaching, but the numbers should be much smaller and the remaining difficulties more tractable.

## Recommendations



1. Teachers can significantly enhance the learning of low achievers by adopting cooperative learning or structured phonetic classroom models. This avoids a great deal of frustration, demotivation, and possibly stigmatization for the children, as well as greatly reduces difficulties, expense, and disruption inherent to providing supplemental small-group or tutoring services.
2. One-to-one teaching is highly effective. Children who have failed to respond in normal lessons or to proven small-group tutorials should receive one-to-one tutoring using proven phonetic models before long-term special education services are considered.
3. The evidence does not support the idea that a relatively brief tutoring experience in the early years of school is enough to ensure long term success. Use of effective classroom teaching models over many years is needed for lasting impacts.
4. Programs that provide extensive professional development to teachers in proven models are more effective than programs that provide technology, alternative curricula, or other interventions that do not change daily teaching practices.




The message of the review is optimistic. There are many proven and promising approaches for struggling readers, and it would be irresponsible not to use these with the aim of reducing the number of children who fail to learn to read adequately. We have both effective and cost-effective tools at hand. While more research is always needed, we already know enough to make a substantial difference in the reading performance of at-risk children.




## Program Ratings

Listed below are currently available programs, grouped by strength of evidence of effectiveness. For type, One-to-One Tutoring by Teachers = TT, One-to-One Tutoring by Paraprofessionals and Volunteers = T-Para/ Volunteers, Small Group Tutorials = SGT, Classroom Instructional Process Approaches = CIP, Classroom Instructional Process Programs with Tutoring = CIP+T, and Instructional Technology = IT.

### Strong Evidence of Effectiveness

Rating	Program	Type	Description	Contact / Website
	Success for All	CIP+ TT	Provides extensive school staff training and materials focused on cooperative learning, phonics, and a rapid pace of instruction. Also provides tutoring to struggling children.	Website: <a href="http://www.successforall.org">www.successforall.org</a> E-mail: <a href="mailto:sfainfo@successforall.org">sfainfo@successforall.org</a>
	Direct Instruction/ Corrective Reading	CIP, SGT	A highly structured, phonetic approach to reading instruction that emphasizes phonics, a step-by-step instructional approach, and direct teaching of comprehension skills, as well as extensive professional development and follow-up.	Website: <a href="http://www.nifdi.org">www.nifdi.org</a> E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@nifdi.org">info@nifdi.org</a>


Rating	Program	Type	Description	Contact / Website
	Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS)	CIP	A technique in which children work in pairs, taking turns as teacher and learner, to learn a structured sequence of literacy skills, such as phonemic awareness, phonics, sound blending, passage reading, and story retelling.	Website: <a href="http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/pals">kc.vanderbilt.edu/pals</a> E-mail: <a href="mailto:pals@vanderbilt.edu">pals@vanderbilt.edu</a>
	Reading Recovery	TT	Provides the lowest achieving readers (lowest 20%) in first grade with supplemental tutoring in addition to their regular reading classes.	Website: <a href="http://www.readingrecovery.org">www.readingrecovery.org</a> E-mail: <a href="mailto:jwolf@readingrecovery.org">jwolf@readingrecovery.org</a>
	Targeted Reading Intervention	TT	A one-to-one tutoring model in which classroom teachers work individually with struggling readers in kindergarten or first grade for 15 minutes a day. The 1-1 sessions focus on re-reading for fluency (2 min.), word work (6 min.), and guided oral reading (7 min.).	E-mail: <a href="mailto:lynnevf@email.unc.edu">lynnevf@email.unc.edu</a>

Rating	Program	Type	Description	Contact / Website
	Quick Reads	SGT	A supplementary program designed to increase fluency, build vocabulary and background knowledge, and improve comprehension.	Website: <a href="http://www.quickreads.org">www.quickreads.org</a> E-mail: <a href="mailto:quickreads@textproject.org">quickreads@textproject.org</a>
	One-to-One Teacher Tutoring with Phonics Emphasis *	TT	Programs: 1) Auditory Discrimination in Depth (TT) 2) Early Steps/Howard Street Tutoring (TT) 3) Intensive Reading Remediation (TT) 4) Reading Rescue (TT) 5) Reading with Phonology (TT)	1) Website: <a href="http://www.lindamoodbell.com/programs/lips.html">www.lindamoodbell.com/programs/lips.html</a> 2) E-mail: <a href="mailto:morrisrd@appstate.edu">morrisrd@appstate.edu</a> 3) E-mail: <a href="mailto:blachman@syr.edu">blachman@syr.edu</a> 4) Website: <a href="http://www.literacytrust.org/rrprogram/index.htm">www.literacytrust.org/rrprogram/index.htm</a> 5) E-mail: <a href="mailto:crl@psych.york.ac.uk">crl@psych.york.ac.uk</a>
	One-to-One Paraprofessional/Volunteer Tutoring with Phonics Emphasis *	T-Para/Volunteer	Programs: 1) Sound Partners (T-Para) 2) The Reading Connection (T-Para) 3) SMART (T-Para) 4) Reading Rescue (T-Para) 5) Howard Street Tutoring (T-Para) 6) Book Buddies (T-Volunteer)	1) E-mail: <a href="mailto:partners@wri-edu.org">partners@wri-edu.org</a> 2) Website: <a href="http://www.thereadingconnection.org">www.thereadingconnection.org</a> 3) Website: <a href="http://www.getsmartoregon.org">www.getsmartoregon.org</a> 4) Website: <a href="http://www.literacytrust.org/rrprogram/index.htm">www.literacytrust.org/rrprogram/index.htm</a> 5) E-mail: <a href="mailto:morrisrd@appstate.edu">morrisrd@appstate.edu</a> 6) E-mail: <a href="mailto:mai@virginia.edu">mai@virginia.edu</a>


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\* These are similar one-to-one tutoring programs. Each has evidence of effectiveness from studies with sample sizes too small to qualify for “strong evidence” on their own.




### Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness





Rating	Program	Type	Description	Contact / Website
	Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC)	CIP	A cooperative learning program designed to help students develop metacognitive strategies for comprehending narrative and expository text.	Website: <a href="http://www.successforall.org">www.successforall.org</a> E-mail: <a href="mailto:sfainfo@successforall.org">sfainfo@successforall.org</a>




### Limited Evidence of Effectiveness: Strong Evidence of Modest Effects




Rating	Program	Type	Description	Contact / Website
	Jostens/ Compass Learning	CAI	Provides an extensive set of assessments which place students according to their current levels of performance and then gives students exercises designed primarily to fill in gaps in their skills.	Website: <a href="http://www.compasslearning.com">www.compasslearning.com</a>





### Limited Evidence of Effectiveness: Weak Evidence with Notable Effects




Rating	Program	Type	Description	Contact / Website
	Contextually-Based Vocabulary Instruction	CIP	A supplementary intervention in which third and fifth graders receive instruction in multiple meanings of vocabulary words. The supplementary instruction takes place twice weekly for 20-30 minutes.	E-mail: <a href="mailto:rnelson8@unl.edu">rnelson8@unl.edu</a>
	Early Intervention in Reading	SGT	Focuses on phonemic segmentation and blending, phonics instruction, story reading and re-reading, comprehension, and home reading. In addition to 15-20 minutes of small group teaching, students receive one-to-one or one-to-two tutoring from a paraprofessional 5-10 minutes daily.	Website: <a href="http://www.earlyinterventioninreading.com">www.earlyinterventioninreading.com</a>
	Edmark	T-Para	A highly-structured one-to-one tutoring program designed to build a 150-word vocabulary in beginning or disabled readers.	Complete contact form at: <a href="http://hmlt.hmco.com/Contact.php">http://hmlt.hmco.com/Contact.php</a>

Rating	Program	Type	Description	Contact / Website
	Lexia	CAI	Consists of various activities that teach phonetic word-attack strategies to promote automaticity in word recognition. Students typically participate in 2 to 4 20-30-minute sessions a week.	Website: <a href="http://www.lexialearning.com">www.lexialearning.com</a> E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@lexialearning.com">info@lexialearning.com</a>
	Lindamood Phoneme Sequence Program	SGT	A one-to-one tutoring program with a strong phonics focus that teaches children to notice how their mouths make various sounds and relates these to letters and sound blending.	Website: <a href="http://www.lindamoodbell.com/programs/lips.html">www.lindamoodbell.com/programs/lips.html</a>
	PHAST Reading	SGT	Designed to teach children word identification skills and decoding strategies and to promote their effective use of these strategies.	E-mail: <a href="mailto:ldrp@sickkids.ca">ldrp@sickkids.ca</a>
	Precision Teaching	CIP	A precision teaching approach designed to help disadvantaged children with mental retardation learn to read.	No contact information currently available.

Rating	Program	Type	Description	Contact / Website
	Proactive Reading	SGT	Emphasizes phonemic awareness, letter sounds, reading of decodable text, fluency, and comprehension of connected text. The teaching emphasizes rapid instruction, frequent opportunities to respond, positive feedback, and immediate error correction.	Website: <a href="http://www.texasreading.org/utcrla/research/scale_up_proactive.asp">www.texasreading.org/utcrla/research/scale_up_proactive.asp</a> E-mail: <a href="mailto:tkurz@mail.utexas.edu">tkurz@mail.utexas.edu</a>
	Programmed Tutorial Reading	T-Para	A program in which paraprofessional tutors are given step-by-step procedures for a series of lessons that children proceed through at their own levels and rates. The curriculum focuses on word attack and comprehension skills.	No contact information currently available.
	Project READ	CIP	A phonetic approach to beginning reading instruction based on the Orton-Gillingham method, originally designed for tutoring dyslexics.	Website: <a href="http://www.projectread.com">www.projectread.com</a> E-mail: <a href="mailto:languagecircle@projectread.com">languagecircle@projectread.com</a>

Rating	Program	Type	Description	Contact / Website
	RAILS	CIP	Provides children in grades K-2 with a second reading period each day to supplement their 60-90 minute reading, and provides teachers with extensive professional development focusing on explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, and vocabulary.	E-mail: RJS15@PSU.EDU
	Read Naturally	SGT	A small group supplementary program that focuses on building fluency among low achievers. Students start with a “cold read” of a story and then practice with audiotapes until they reach a fluency target.	Website: <a href="http://www.readnaturally.com">www.readnaturally.com</a> E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@readnaturally.com">info@readnaturally.com</a>
	Read, Write, and Type	SGT	A computer-assisted instruction program used to create a small group teaching intervention, in which specially trained teachers added to schools’ staffs work with struggling first graders in groups of 3.	Website: <a href="http://www.talkingfingers.com">www.talkingfingers.com</a> E-mail: <a href="mailto:contact@talkingfingers.com">contact@talkingfingers.com</a>

Rating	Program	Type	Description	Contact / Website
	Reading Styles	CIP	An intervention in which children with learning disabilities are assessed on a reading style inventory and then given small group instruction matched to their favored styles.	Website: <a href="http://www.nrsi.com">www.nrsi.com</a> E-mail: <a href="mailto:readingstyle@nrsi.com">readingstyle@nrsi.com</a>
	Responsive Reading	SGT	A program in which teachers alternate among children to provide intensive scaffolding at each child's level. A daily lesson cycle consists of fluency building, assessment, letters and words, supported reading, and supported writing.	E-mail: <a href="mailto:pmathes@smu.edu">pmathes@smu.edu</a>
	Same Age Tutoring	CIP	A dyadic reading approach in which children reading below grade level are assigned to pairs with normal-progress reading partners.	E-mail: <a href="mailto:Hilde.Vankeer@ugent.be">Hilde.Vankeer@ugent.be</a>
	SHIP	SGT	A program that provides 30 minutes of daily supplemental instruction to struggling readers in groups of 2-3, over a two-year period.	No contact information currently available.

Rating	Program	Type	Description	Contact / Website
	TEACH	TT	A one-to-one tutoring program that focuses on identifying perceptual deficits (such as delayed acquisition of spatial and temporal orientation) using an instrument called SEARCH and then provides one-to-one tutoring focused not on reading instruction but on neurological skills.	Website: <a href="http://www.searchandteach.com">www.searchandteach.com</a> E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@searchandteach.com">info@searchandteach.com</a>
	Voyager Passport	SGT	A commercial small-group program for struggling readers that emphasizes phonics, phonemic awareness, comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency in daily 30-40 minute sessions.	Website: <a href="http://www.voyagerlearning.com/passport">www.voyagerlearning.com/passport</a>
	Wallach and Wallach	T-Para	An early phonetic approach for struggling first graders. Paraprofessionals use the program a half hour each day throughout first grade.	No contact information currently available.

### Insufficient Evidence of Effectiveness

Academy of Reading  
Destination Reading  
Experience Corps

Failure-Free Reading  
Fast ForWord  
Gottshall Small Group Phonics  
Headsprout  
HOSTS  
New Heights  
Knowledge Box  
LeapTrack  
Plan Focus  
Read 180  
Spell Read  
Targeted Intervention  
Waterford  
Wilson Reading

## **N No Qualifying Studies**

100 Book Challenge  
A Comprehensive Curriculum for Early Student Success (ACCESS)  
Academic Associates Learning Centers  
Accelerated Reader  
ALEKS®  
ALPHabiTunes  
Alpha-Phonics  
Balanced Early Literacy Initiative  
Barton Reading and Spelling System  
Benchmark  
BookMARK  
Bradley Reading and Language Arts  
Breakthrough to Literacy  
Bridge  
Bridge to Reading  
Bring the Classics to Life  
CIERA School Change Framework  
Comprehensive Early Literacy Learning  
Classwide Peer Tutoring©  
Compensatory Language Experiences and Reading Program (CLEAR)  
Core Knowledge  
Cornerstone Literacy Initiative  
Curious George Reading and Phonics

DaisyQuest  
Davis Learning Strategies™  
Discover Intensive Phonics for Yourself  
Discovery World  
Dominie  
Dr. Cupp Readers® & Journal Writers  
Early Success  
Early to Read  
Earobics®  
Emerging Readers  
Essential Skills  
Evidence Based Literacy Instruction  
Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction (ECRI)  
Fast Track Action  
Felipe's Sound Search  
First grade Literacy Intervention Program (FLIP)  
First Steps  
Flippen Reading Connections™  
Fluency Formula  
FOCUS: A Reading and Language Program  
Four Block Framework  
Frontline Phonics  
Foundations  
Funnix  
GOcabulary Program for Elementary Students  
Goldman-Lynch Language Stimulation Program  
Goldman-Lynch Sounds-in-Symbols  
Great Leaps  
Guided Discovery LOGO  
Guided Reading  
Harcourt Accelerated Reading Instruction  
Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)  
Hooked on Phonics®  
Huntington Phonics  
IntelliTools Reading  
Insights: Reading as Thinking  
Invitations to Literacy  
Irlen method  
Jigsaw Classroom  
Johnny Can Spell  
Jolly Phonics

Kaleidoscope  
KidCentered learning  
Knowledge Box  
Ladders to Literacy  
Language for Learning  
Language for Thinking  
Leap into Phonics  
Letter People  
Letterland  
LinguiSystems  
Literacy Collaborative  
Literacy First  
Little Books  
Little Readers  
LocuTour  
Matchword  
Merit Reading Software Program  
Multicultural Reading and Thinking Program (McRAT)  
My Reading Coach  
New Century Integrated Instructional System  
Next Steps  
Onward to Excellence  
Pacemaker  
Pacific Literacy  
Pause, Prompt, & Praise©  
Peabody Language Development Kits  
Performance Learning Systems  
Phonemic Awareness in Young Children  
Phonics for Reading  
Phonics Q  
Phono-Graphix  
PM Plus Readers  
Primary Phonics  
Programmed Tutorial Reading  
Project Child  
Project FAST  
Project LISTEN  
Project PLUS  
Rainbow Reading  
Read Well  
Reading Bridge

Reading Explorer's Pathfinders Tutoring Kit  
Reading Intervention for Early Success  
Reading Rods  
Reading Step by Step  
Reading Success from the Start  
Reading Upgrade  
Richards Read Systematic Language Program  
Right Start to Reading  
Road to the Code  
ROAR Reading System  
S.P.I.R.E.  
SAIL (Second grade Acceleration to Literacy)  
Saxon Phonics  
Schoolwide Early Language and Literacy (SWELL)  
Sing, Spell, Read, and Write (SSRW)  
SkillsTutor  
Soar to Success  
Soliloquy  
Sunday System  
Sound Reading  
Sounds and Symbols Early Reading Program  
Spalding Writing Road to Reading  
Starfall  
Start Up Kit  
Stepping Stones to Literacy  
STEPS (Sequential teaching of Explicit Phonics and Spelling)  
Stories and More  
Story Comprehension to Go  
Storyteller Guided Reading  
Strategies the Work  
Student Team Achievement Divisions (STAD)  
Successmaker®  
Sullivan Program  
Super QAR  
Teacher Vision®  
Ticket to Read  
Touchphonics  
Tribes learning Communities®  
Verticy Learning  
Voices Reading  
VoWac (Vowel Oriented Word Attack Course)

## Full Report

This guide was adapted from “Slavin, R.E., Lake, C., Davis, S., & Madden, N. (2009, June) *Effective programs for struggling readers: A best evidence synthesis*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Data-Driven Reform in Education.”

The full report is available on Johns Hopkins University’s Best Evidence Encyclopedia (BEE) website at [www.bestevidence.org](http://www.bestevidence.org).

## Glossary

### Effect size

The effect size shows how much difference a program/intervention makes. It is the difference between the mean of the experimental group and the mean of the control group, divided by the standard deviation of the control group.

The important point is that the larger the effect size, the greater the difference the program/intervention has made. An effect size of more than +0.20 is generally considered educationally significant.

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