



≡ Menu

Home

Elements of an Effective Reading Program

Strong, core reading curriculum

A strong, core reading curriculum—consistent with the research consensus on effective reading instruction and delivered by knowledgeable teachers—is essential for all students. A carefully crafted approach to the teaching of reading reflecting the research consensus that effective beginning reading instruction must include explicit, systematic, core classroom instruction in kindergarten through third grade on these essential components: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

Instructional materials aligned with research

All K-3 teachers should have access to core reading instructional materials aligned with the research consensus, which include both decodable texts with which students can practice their skills as well as rich children's literature and informational texts through which students' vocabulary, background knowledge and interest will be enhanced.

Appropriate Reading Assessments

To ensure that instruction is meeting every student's needs, teachers must have access to and use appropriate reading assessment tools: screening measures to identify children at risk of reading failure, periodic progress monitoring to ensure that instruction is appropriate and students are on track, and diagnostic assessments to identify special needs some students may have. Data from these assessments should inform instruction, small-group placement, intervention and referral for special services.

Timely, intensive intervention for struggling students

It is more effective to intervene early with struggling readers than it is to try to catch them after they've experienced long-term reading failure. Therefore, schools must provide appropriate, timely, intensive, systematic intervention for those students who need it; to do so may require both reallocation of current resources and new resources to implement such intervention. Our students deserve no less.

High-quality professional development

Teachers can't teach what they haven't been taught; yet, too few teachers have been provided the necessary knowledge and skills in research-based reading instruction during their preservice or in-service preparation. Therefore, districts and schools must ensure that K-3 staff (and the administrators who support them) have opportunities for high-quality professional development in early reading instruction.

Stay Connected



Randi Weingarten

PRESIDENT

Fedrick C. Ingram

SECRETARY-TREASURER

Evelyn DeJesus

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Our Mission

The American Federation of Teachers is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

[Contact](#)[AFT Store](#)[Careers at AFT](#)[Privacy Policy](#)

© American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. All rights reserved.

Photographs and illustrations, as well as text, cannot be used without permission from the AFT.