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IMPORTANT READING FACTS

Reading to your child from infancy on has an influencing effect on all the variables of development whether the evidence of it is directly visible or not. According to the AAP (American Association of Pediatrics), reading is a significant aid in brain development and encourages a solidifying, emotional bond between parent and child. The AAP recommends initiating a daily routine of reading for infants as well as older children. However, their records reveal that only 50% of parents read to their children every day.

Language is the most utilized form of communication. Children who are introduced to books at an early age are more prone to grasp the variances in phonics, which in turn affects their language skills and cognitive abilities.

SOURCE: http://www.essortment.com/all/childreadingim_rhqw.htm

Most children will learn to read, no matter what method is used to teach them. But unless they receive special help, at least 20% of them cannot master this simple task that the rest of us take for granted.

About 10 million children have difficulties learning to read. From 10% to 15% eventually drop out of high school; only 2% complete a four-year college program. Surveys of adolescents and young adults with criminal records show that about half have reading difficulties. Similarly, about half of youths with a history of substance abuse have reading problems.

Contrary to what many people believe, NICHD (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development) research has shown that reading disability affects boys and girls at roughly the same rate. Reading disabled boys, however, are more likely to be referred for treatment, as they are more likely to get the teacher's attention by misbehaving. Reading disabled girls may escape the teacher's attention, as they may withdraw into quiet daydreaming.

NICHD studies have found, however, that at least 20% of children must be taught this letter-sound system directly in order to learn to read successfully. The greatest possibility for success lies in identifying and treating these children before they reach third grade. This does not mean that older children cannot be helped; only that teaching them to read at an appropriate level for their age becomes progressively more difficult as they get older.

SOURCE: <http://www.medhelp.org/NIHlib/GF-143.html>

Myth about reading continue to prevail, but overwhelming research now has learning scientists, educators, and professional teachers' groups, such as the American Federation of Teachers, in agreement regarding the general facts about reading:

- Learning to read is not a natural process that just happens on its own. While at one time reading was thought to develop naturally when a child was ready, or "mature" enough, this is no longer the belief.
- Many parents think that as long as their child is bright, or is read to a lot, he or she will learn how to read with no problem - but the evidence does not support this. In order to learn to read, children must learn the component skills necessary for reading.
- For all but a few children, learning to read requires explicit instruction. Learning experts now agree that an effective reading program needs to include all the major components of reading instruction - phonemic (or sound unit) awareness, phonics, sounding out, and blending, etc.
- Research now indicates that the 4- to 6-year-old age range is the sweet spot for teaching reading. Beyond the age of 6 or 7, teaching a child to read is a game of catch up.
- The range of entering skills among primary-grade students - regardless of their background - varies widely, and is extremely challenging to manage for even our best teachers.
- Given the "facts of life" in a classroom - overall student/teacher ratios and general work overload - most teachers do the best job they can. But providing individual attention and interaction based on each child's unique capabilities, and managing an entire class at the same time, is a daunting challenge.

One thing is clear: Too many of our children cannot read or have difficulty reading. And, if they don't read fluently, the chances for a fulfilling life - in terms of job skills, financial stability, or academic achievement - are greatly diminished.

- Reading difficulty is a problem that extends across socioeconomic strata - affluence is no guarantee of reading success.
American Federation of Teachers

- Learning to read is a crucial step in children's education because those who fare poorly in the early grades are unlikely to catch up with their more skilled classmates.
Scientific American, March 2002
- Estimates indicate that at least 20 million of the nation's 53 million school-age children are poor readers - about two out of five children.
National Institutes of Health
- If a child is a poor reader at the end of first grade, there is an almost 90% probability that the child will be a poor reader at the end of fourth grade.
The Public Library Association
- Three-quarters of students who are poor readers in third grade will remain poor readers in high school.
Yale University
- Approximately one-third of all poorly performing fourth graders have college-educated parents.
National Assessment of Educational Progress
- Nearly 40% of fourth graders have not mastered basic reading skills. It's nearly 60% in California, and almost half of these children live with college-educated parents.
Council for Basic Education
- Experts say about 5% of the nation's children learn to read with ease, almost intuitively. An additional 20% to 30% learn to read with relative ease once they begin some kind of formal instruction. However, the bulk of children (about 60%) have difficulty.
Council for Basic Education
- 60% of our nation's children experience formidable challenges learning to read, and for at least 20%-30%, learning to read is one of the most difficult tasks they will confront in school.
National Institute of Child Health & Human Development
- For 90%-95% of poor readers, prevention and early intervention programs that combine instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, reading fluency, and reading comprehension can increase reading skills to average reading levels.
National Institute of Child Health & Human Development
- Research results from a variety of studies clearly support the conclusion that early systematic phonics instruction significantly improves reading and spelling abilities for all children, and ideally, should be made available to children before first grade.
Congressionally-mandated National Reading Panel Report, April 2000

SOURCE: <http://www.headsprout.com/school/readingFacts.cfm>