

O-G Reading Clinic

A Parent Guide to Intervention

Understanding targeted support for reading and spelling

What is intervention?

Intervention is targeted teaching designed to address specific gaps in a child's reading, spelling or written language skills. It is more intensive and individualised than ordinary classroom instruction and should begin at the point where the child's knowledge becomes insecure.

Why might a child need intervention?

- They are not making expected progress despite classroom teaching and practice.
- They rely on guessing rather than accurately decoding unfamiliar words.
- They have difficulty remembering letter-sound links, spelling patterns or taught rules.
- Reading is slow, effortful or inaccurate, affecting confidence and comprehension.
- Their spelling is substantially weaker than their oral language or general ability.
- They have a diagnosed or suspected learning difficulty such as dyslexia or dysgraphia.

Intervention is not simply more of the same

Effective intervention changes the way material is taught. It provides smaller teaching steps, clearer explanations, more guided practice, closer monitoring and systematic revision.

General classroom support	Targeted intervention
Covers year-level curriculum	Begins at the child's current skill level
Usually delivered to a whole class or group	Delivered individually or in a very small group
Moves at the class pace	Moves at a pace matched to mastery
Includes broad practice	Targets identified weaknesses directly
Checks general progress	Measures specific skills frequently

Early support matters

Children do not need to fail for years before receiving help. Early, targeted teaching can prevent gaps from widening and can reduce frustration, avoidance and loss of confidence.

What effective literacy intervention should include

<p>Explicit teaching</p> <p>Skills are directly explained and demonstrated rather than left for the student to discover.</p>	<p>Systematic sequence</p> <p>Teaching follows a planned order, moving from simpler knowledge to more complex skills.</p>
<p>Cumulative review</p> <p>Previously taught skills are revisited frequently so they are retained and become automatic.</p>	<p>Diagnostic teaching</p> <p>The teacher observes errors closely and adjusts instruction according to the student's responses.</p>
<p>Reading and spelling together</p> <p>Students practise recognising patterns in reading and recalling them for spelling.</p>	<p>Supported practice</p> <p>The student receives immediate feedback, correction and enough successful practice.</p>
<p>Connected-text reading</p> <p>Taught skills are applied in sentences and passages at an appropriate level.</p>	<p>Progress monitoring</p> <p>Specific skills are checked regularly to determine whether teaching is working.</p>

What may be taught

<p>Early foundations</p> <p>phonological awareness, letter knowledge, sound-symbol links and oral blending</p>	<p>Word reading</p> <p>decoding, digraphs, syllable types, vowel patterns and multisyllable strategies</p>	<p>Spelling</p> <p>sound-to-letter mapping, spelling conventions, suffixing rules and morphology</p>
<p>Fluency</p> <p>accurate repeated reading, phrasing, rate and automatic word recognition</p>	<p>Vocabulary and comprehension</p> <p>word meanings, sentence understanding, inference and text structure</p>	<p>Written language</p> <p>handwriting, sentence construction, planning and use of assistive technology where needed</p>

How often should intervention occur?

Frequency depends on the student's age, level of difficulty, stamina and goals. Regular sessions are generally more effective than occasional or inconsistent support because learning needs to be revisited before it is forgotten.

- Consistency matters more than isolated bursts of tutoring.
- Shorter, frequent sessions may suit younger children or students with limited stamina.
- Students with significant gaps may need more intensive or longer-term support.
- Home practice should reinforce taught skills, not introduce confusing new methods.

What parents can expect

1. Identification of need

Information is gathered from school reports, assessments, work samples and parent concerns.

2. Baseline assessment

The teacher identifies what the student can do independently and where breakdown begins.

3. Individual goals

Teaching goals are specific, measurable and connected to the student's current needs.

4. Structured teaching

Lessons follow a consistent format with review, new learning and guided application.

5. Ongoing monitoring

The teacher records accuracy, independence, fluency and the types of errors being made.

6. Review and adjustment

Goals, content or intensity are changed when progress data shows this is needed.

How is progress measured?

Progress should be judged using more than school grades alone. Intervention measures the specific skills being taught and whether the student can apply them accurately, independently and with increasing automaticity.

What may be measured	Signs of progress	Why progress may appear gradual
Accuracy with taught sounds and patterns	Fewer guesses and more complete decoding	The student may have long-standing gaps
Word-reading and spelling accuracy	Better retention between sessions	New skills require repetition before becoming automatic
Reading rate and fluency	Improved willingness to attempt difficult work	Accuracy usually develops before speed
Independence and self-correction	More fluent reading of taught material	More complex classroom tasks may temporarily mask gains
Transfer to classroom work	Reduced prompting and greater confidence	Progress is rarely perfectly even from week to week

A useful question to ask

Do not only ask, "Is my child reading at year level yet?" Also ask, "Are the underlying skills becoming more accurate, secure and independent?"

How parents can support intervention

Protect attendance and routine

Regular attendance allows teaching to remain cumulative and reduces the need to reteach forgotten material.

Use the same language and strategies

Consistent terminology between clinic, school and home helps the child consolidate learning.

Notice effort and strategy

Praise accurate sounding out, careful checking and persistence rather than speed alone.

Keep practice brief and positive

A few focused minutes using material supplied by the teacher is usually better than long, stressful sessions.

Read to your child

Listening to books develops vocabulary, knowledge and enjoyment even when independent reading is difficult.

Share relevant information

Tell the intervention teacher about school concerns, new assessments, fatigue, anxiety or changes in medication.

Questions parents may wish to ask

- What specific skills are currently being targeted?
- How was the starting point selected?
- How will progress be measured and communicated?
- How often should my child attend?
- What should we practise at home, and what should we avoid?
- How will intervention connect with classroom learning and accommodations?
- When will goals and the level of support be reviewed?

Intervention and school adjustments

Intervention teaches the skills a student needs to develop. Adjustments provide fair access to learning while those skills are still developing. A student may need both at the same time.

Intervention

Directly teaches reading, spelling, fluency or written-language skills.

Adjustments

Reduce barriers through supports such as extra time, text-to-speech, reduced copying or alternative response methods.

When should support be reviewed?

- When the student is not retaining or transferring taught skills.
- When progress has stalled despite consistent attendance and practice.
- When school demands change or the student moves into a new educational stage.
- When emotional wellbeing, behaviour or avoidance is worsening.
- When new assessment information becomes available.

Final message

Effective intervention is purposeful, structured and responsive. It does not promise instant results, but it should provide a clear teaching plan, measurable goals and evidence that the student is becoming more accurate, independent and confident over time.



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