

Questions Parents Can Ask about Reading Improvement

Parents of children with disabilities who are receiving special education reading instruction need information to participate in writing the IEP and in working with their children at home. When speaking with your child's teacher(s) or school staff, use the following questions to help you gather the information you need. Remember if you do not understand something, ask to have it explained thoroughly. The supports that your child needs must be included in their IEP.

If you have questions about your child's overall reading progress, ask:

1. What is my child's grade level in reading? What does that mean she can do?
2. Where does she need to improve?
3. Is there a difference between how well my child reads individual words and how well she understands what she reads? If so, what can we do to improve the weaker areas?
4. Are you using a specific program to teach my child? If so, what skills does this program teach?
5. If you are not using a specific program, what strategies are you using to teach my child to identify words, read smoothly and understand what he reads?
6. What kinds of things are you doing to help my child succeed in reading? (such as: providing support by a reading specialist, providing different materials)
7. What can I do at home to help my son/daughter read well? (For example: Can you suggest workshops, reading lists, parent/child materials that I may borrow, or website supports?)
8. How will I be notified about my child's reading gains? Can you update me every 2-3 weeks?

If you have questions about word recognition, sounds, and fluency in reading, ask:

1. Has my child been tested for language and sound awareness? If so, how recently and what did the testing show?
2. What is being done in the classroom to help my child avoid pausing unnecessarily at words?
3. What strategies are being taught to help my child work through difficult sounds or words when reading?
4. What are some books, poems, nursery rhymes, word games, books, videos, audio materials, etc. that I can use at home to help my child with word recognition, sounds and/or reading aloud?
5. For practicing reading at home, would you help me select material(s) that my child can read comfortably (i.e., where 90% of the words are ones my child knows)?

If you have questions about reading comprehension, ask:

1. When my child is having trouble understanding what she reads, what do you do to help her understand the material?
2. Would you show me what you are doing?
3. Can you tell me about some other activities that I can do at home to help her understand what she reads?
4. What resources can you give me to use at home to help my child?
5. What kinds of activities can we do before and after my child has read to help her understand the information?

If you have questions about reading instruction in other subject areas, ask:

1. Which accommodations does my child need in core academic and special area classes to support her reading, writing and spelling needs? (You need to make sure that the special ways of addressing these literacy needs are specifically described in your child's IEP.)
2. What are my child's other teachers doing to support and help her in light of her reading, writing and/or spelling needs?



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PATH Project: 1-800-866-4726



PEN Project: 1-877-762-1435



TEAM Project: 1-877-832-8945

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