



Learning to Read the Hard Way

7 Ways to Know Your Child is Learning to Read the Hard Way



In baseball, when a runner wants to steal second base, the first thing he needs to do is carefully observe the pitcher. Depending on certain moves the pitcher makes, a skilled base stealer can tell whether he's going to throw the ball to the catcher, the first baseman, or just fake the throw completely. If the runner doesn't correctly "read the signs," and anticipate the pitcher's next move, he's probably going to be out.

The ability to notice signals isn't just important in baseball; it's also important for parents of emerging readers. Clear signs exist that can help you figure out if your child is struggling, but if you don't understand how to "read the reader," then you could miss them.

This is important because struggling readers often find quite clever ways to compensate, which can mask the problem. These coping strategies may work - for a while. However, over time, reading grows more difficult. Eventually, struggling readers just get stuck, not having learned to read properly and now having to "unlearn" bad reading habits.

Parents who know how to "read the signs" can catch their child before any habits become ingrained. Let's take a look at a few ways you can check and see if your child is learning to read the hard way.

- 1) Does your child avoid reading aloud?** Struggling readers will rarely volunteer to read passages in the classroom, and at home these children would rather have other family members read to them.
- 2) Does your child often skip, add or omit small words?** At first glance, skipping a word like "the," "at," or "not" may seem unimportant but skipping words can completely change the meaning of a sentence or paragraph.
- 3) Does your child choose to read simple books with very little text or read the same book over and over?** Children who are not confident in their ability to sound out new words will not want to attempt new, more challenging books.
- 4) Does your child guess at words based on the first letter in the word?** Struggling readers who guess at words also like reading books with lots of pictures because pictures help them guess correctly. A good guesser can really fool a parent into thinking he is reading well.
- 5) Do you think your child is trying to memorize every word he reads?** Some struggling readers will simply try to memorize in order to compensate for

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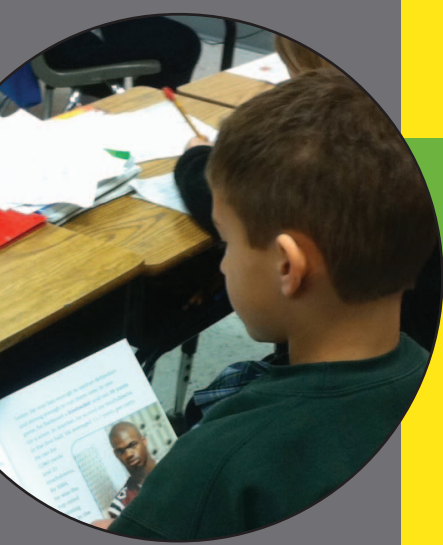
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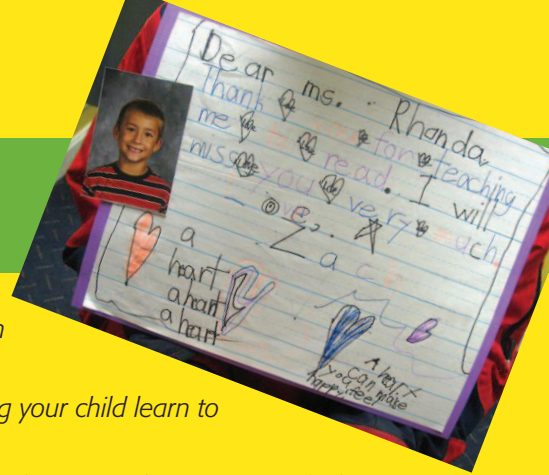
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www.WeTeachReading.com



Zach's Story



My 8 year old son, Zach, is a talented athlete. Yes, I'm a typical proud mom, but it's true.

Watching your child excel in sports is exciting. Watching your child learn to read is life-changing.

One day, Zach told me, "Mom, here's the deal. I'm good at sports, but I can't read. That's just how it is." Zach had already resigned himself to the "fact" that he couldn't learn to read, so sports would be "his thing" instead.

Of course, my response was, "You can't even play sports if you don't know how to read," followed by, "Michael Jordan reads."

But Zach was emphatic. "Mom you are just going to have to deal with this."

So that is exactly what we did. This is Zach's story. The story of how we learned to deal with this.

Zach was never interested in books or stories. He didn't even want me to read to him. When he started school, his teacher expressed concerns about both his reading and behavior in class.

Several people suggested I have Zach evaluated, so I did. The diagnosis: expressive language disorder, very low phonetic and reading skills, and ADHD. Some suggested we give Zach meds for ADHD, as that might help his reading. But I had a nagging question, "What if Zach could read, would he stop acting up?" We tried many things, including professional help and language therapy, but nothing helped.

Then I found out about the Langsford Center.

Without a doubt, Zach's time at Langsford was THE MOST IMPORTANT TIME IN HIS LIFE, up to this point. I am sure that years from now I will look back and consider it the most influential part of his childhood.

When we met with Stephen to go over Zach's test results, Stephen showed me the exact piece of the puzzle that was missing for Zach. The folks at Langsford then proposed a plan. To be honest, I was a bit overwhelmed. It required a lot of time and money. How would I get Zach there every day? How would Zach handle leaving school early every day? Would it be too much for him?

Stephen came to the school, though, and everyone worked together on a plan to help Zach. My amazing parents pitched in by driving Zach every day.

In the next 3 months, the changes in Zach were amazing. His handwriting improved drastically. He learned sounds, and how to blend them. He started reading... actually reading!

The teachers at Langsford systematically worked on Zach's exact issues. Zach started explaining things to me, rules of reading I didn't know. He worked very hard. As he learned to read, I started to see confidence... and pride... and by the day of his "graduation" - excitement!

By the end of the year, Zach's 1st grade teacher told me Zach was having no trouble, that he was reading at or above grade level. Now in the middle of 2nd second grade, he has an A in reading and most other subjects, too. He's in the accelerated reader program, mostly reading books about professional athletes. It's still not his favorite thing to do, but he reads. His 2nd grade teacher also reports that reading is no longer an issue for Zach. That is so comforting.

Whenever someone tells me their child struggles with reading, I always tell them about Langsford. The teachers are wonderful, caring and motivated. And they have developed specific tools to help children learn to read, tools that work.

I am so glad I kept looking and found the Langsford Center!



Would you like to see your Langsford story in the next Langsford Letter? Just send your letter and a picture of your former Langsford student to our nearest office.



Don't be left out of the Langsford loop!

Keep up with events, programs and receive information about reading by joining our email list.

To sign up today, simply go to www.WeTeachReading.com

Read our blog for a peek inside Langsford: www.langsfordblog.com

A child's success in school, as well as life, is dependent upon his ability to read. Yet many of our students are unable to read at a proficient level. This is alarming news in general, but especially upsetting when our own child is struggling with reading. We hear conflicting information on the best ways to teach reading, and when to address reading issues. We may feel overwhelmed and perplexed as to what to do.

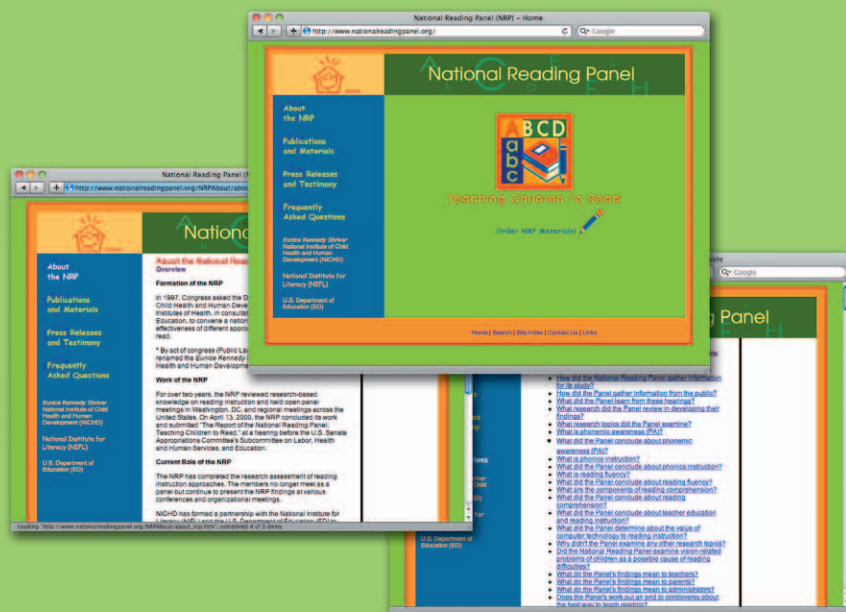
Website Spotlight

National Reading Panel

www.NationalReadingPanel.org

Who would you trust most to take care of your medical needs if you were sick? Wouldn't you want a doctor who was well educated and up-to-date on all the latest medical research? You should look for the same research based expertise when addressing your child's reading issues.

In 1997 Congress asked the Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) at the National Institutes of Health, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, to convene a national panel to assess the effectiveness of different approaches used



to teach children to read. This panel was made up of leading scientists in reading research, representatives of colleges of education, reading teachers, administrators and parents.

The panel's report gives clear direction on how children learn to read, what intervention is helpful, and the time that it is best implemented. For more information, visit the National Reading Panel's website. This website tells you about the NRP, has a section answering frequently asked questions, and gives information about other publications and materials related to reading. You owe it to your child to be in the know about what has been learned through scientific research about reading.

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the inability to sound out unknown words. Memorization does work to a point but without developing word analysis skills, reading will get progressively harder because there are just too many words in our language to rely on memory alone.

6) How hard does your child have to study to do well on Friday spelling tests? Once your child learns to spell words properly, does he retain and use that proper spelling? Struggling readers may perform well on spelling tests but they have to work very hard all week long. This can be very exhausting for both the parents and the child. Even worse, struggling readers often can't remember the words they learned

and soon after the spelling test consistently misspell those very same words.

7) Does your child use very simple words and language when writing? Another spelling signal to watch for is whether your child's writing vocabulary matches up with his speaking vocabulary. A struggling reader may write in very simple language even though he has a strong vocabulary because he's using "safe" words he knows how to read and spell easily.

We can help. We teach reading and spelling. See our list of 6 mistakes to avoid with young readers at www.WeTeachReading.com/6mistakes



We teach reading
& learning for life!

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Langsford Learning Acceleration Centers, with locations in Louisville, Kentucky, and Cincinnati, Ohio, has served children and adults since 1992. We have proven results teaching phonological (phonemic) awareness, phonics, reading, spelling, reading and listening comprehension, and handwriting using specialized, research-validated approaches.

From enrichment to remediation, we have extensive experience training the foundations associated with independent learning, including helping individuals with learning disabilities, auditory processing disorder and dyslexia.

- **Multisensory, one-to-one learning sessions**
- **A customized plan of action**
- **Diagnostic assessment**
- **Highly-trained, year-round staff**

**We Make
Learning
Fun!**

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