

## Fleming and Roden: Tips for homeschooling your struggling reader

Here at WY Lit, we have experience tutoring our own struggling readers. It can be hard. We wanted to share some of our experiences and our favorite resources with you. We learned how to do this and so can you. You got this.

Simply doing homework with your child can be emotionally taxing. Throw in full-time homeschooling, an unexpected difficulty learning to read, your child's anxiety, your own insecurity about teaching them to read and then what is going on in the world right now, and you have the perfect storm for a most unpleasant homeschooling experience. It's not your imagination.

Three things to keep in mind:

The best thing you can do for a struggling reader is to read to them or listen to books with them. This teaches them to love escaping into books and continues to expose them to the structure of written language, vocabulary and background knowledge at their comprehension level while they become proficient readers.

Eye reading, ear reading (listening to books) and finger reading (braille) are all legitimate forms of reading. Brain imaging has shown that the same areas of the brain light up whether a person is eye reading or ear reading. Ideally, of course, we want children to become proficient readers. However, if the ultimate goals of reading are enjoyment and use of what is read, we do not care how the book reaches their brain.

About 70-80% of children who have reading difficulties have trouble accurately and efficiently reading words. This difficulty typically results from a difficulty processing the sounds of our language. This results in difficulty connecting those sounds to letters. This is a terrific time to work with your child to firm up foundational reading skills.

Here are some skills that you can easily work on with your child:

- **Phonological Awareness:** Phonological Awareness is the awareness of the sound structure of our language. It is oral and auditory. There are no letters involved in Phonological Awareness.
- **Phonemic Awareness:** Phonemic Awareness is a subset of Phonological Awareness. It is the ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds in words. Advanced Phonemic Awareness (being able to add, delete or substitute sounds) is one of the biggest early predictors of reading proficiency. Phonemic Awareness does not involve print.
- **Phonics:** Connecting letters to spoken sounds.
- **Building Vocabulary and Background Knowledge**
- **Handwriting: Teach cursive!** [What's Lost as Handwriting Fades](#)

Cursive is a “right brain,” artistic activity. We have found that often children who have difficulty with printing letters enjoy cursive!

If you are able to access this article via a phone or computer, you can click on and directly access the high-quality, evidence based free resources below:

**Why, what and how to teach reading and writing:**

- [Reading Rockets: Launching Young Readers](#) Learning modules: [Reading 101: A Guide to Teaching Reading and Writing](#).

## **Instructional Guide: scope and sequence of foundational word reading skills:**

Foundational reading skills are cumulative. That is, they build upon one another. It is important for a student to master one skill before moving on to a more complex skill. For example, students should master reading short words with short vowels like ‘bat’ and ‘lit’ before words with short vowels *and* consonant blends like ‘**bl**at’ and ‘**li**st). Mastery means that the student is able to read and write the words automatically. The M. A. Rooney Foundation and the Florida Center for Reading Research have excellent planning and teaching guides for teachers and parents.

- [MA Rooney Foundation Teacher Manual](#)
- [Florida Center for Reading Research: Questions to Guide Instruction](#)

## **Phonemic Awareness Resources**

- [Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Free Assessment](#)
- [Kilpatrick: Phonological Awareness Screening Test Free Assessment](#)
- [Florida Center for Reading Resources: Student Center Activities](#)
- [The Measured Mom: 25 Free Phonemic Awareness Games](#)

## **Phonics Resources**

- [MA Rooney Foundation Teacher Manual \(Table of Contents click on IPS Quick Phonics Screener\)](#) Free Assessment
- [Florida Center for Reading Resources: Student Center Activities](#)
- [Starfall](#) Phonics skill based games and animated books
- [Reading Bear](#) Practice skill specific word reading, develop vocabulary/background knowledge
- [This Reading Mama Free Printables and Learning Activities](#)
- [The School House US: Free Phonics Lessons](#) Lessons by phonics skill

## Vocabulary and Background Knowledge

- [Reading Rockets Top 10 Resources on Vocabulary](#)

We wish these educational, empowering, research-based podcasts had been available when we started our journey!

## APM Reports Audio Documentaries by Emily Hanford

- [At a Loss for Words: What's wrong with how schools teach reading](#)
- [Hard Words: Why aren't kids being taught to read?](#)
- [Hard to Read: How American schools fail kids with dyslexia](#)
- [Experts say widely used reading curriculum is failing kids](#)

## Resources we wish we had known about:

- [Rocky Mountain Branch of the International Dyslexia Association](#)
- [The Literacy Nest Tips for Parents](#)

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