

LaCrosse Area Dyslexia Research Institute, Inc.

REPEATED ASSISTED ORAL READING

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Repeated Assisted Oral Reading is a partner reading practice that will help your child become a better reader in the following ways:

1. He will read more accurately, mispronouncing or needing help on fewer words.
2. He will read more fluently (better expression and faster)
3. He will remember and understand what has been read better.

It is important, however, to follow directions carefully in order to achieve better reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension:

FIRST: Repeated Assisted Oral Reading (ROAR) must be done as a pair: One expert reader and the child who needs help.

SECOND: It must be done for short periods, and often. Our research showed that 4-5 times a week for 15 minutes each day is best.

THIRD: Practice material must be at your child's reading level. If it is too hard, the practice is wasted, like asking a middle school kid to play on a professional football team. If it is too easy, your child does not need help at that level.

To choose the correct book for your child, count out 100 words and ask him to read aloud to you. If he misses or needs your help with more than 6 words, the book is too hard. If he misses less than 4 words, the book is too easy.

FOURTH: Many children who don't read well don't like to read. They don't expect that they will get any better, so they may need rewards for practice. For example, you might offer him fifteen minutes extra play time before bed in exchange for 15 minutes of work.

Don't worry about your child getting hooked on rewards. We have repeatedly seen that once children are good readers they don't need external rewards: They read for the pleasure of reading. In fact, some parents have said that they have trouble getting their kids to quit reading and turn off the lights at bedtime.

Repeated Oral Assisted Reading: How to do it

Sit next to your child and work sentence by sentence. Use the following cues:

- 1) "My turn." Read the first sentence aloud, using your hand or a pencil to make sure your child is looking at each word as you read it. Read at a natural pace and with interesting expression.
- 2) "Together." Have him read the first sentence with you. It is very important that your child is looking at each word, so have him point under each word while you track above the words. Keep reading to the end of the sentence even if he makes mistakes or can't keep up.

Repeat the "read together" step until your child reads the sentence without mistakes and at the pace as you have set. (You can slow down a bit if he can't keep up.) Do NOT correct individual words. Read the entire sentence again so that words are learned in natural sentences.

- 3) "Your turn." Have your child read the sentence alone. If he reads it without mistakes, go on to the second sentence and repeat steps 1-3 as often as needed for accurate and fluent reading.

It is important to combine sentences, for example, the first two sentences or an entire paragraph after each sentence has been practiced alone.

Frequently Asked Questions About ROAR

“This doesn’t work on sounding out words or answering questions. How can it improve decoding and comprehension?”

Many children learn to decode (sound out) individual words, but misread those same words in sentences because they are not automatic readers. Because they struggle with words and read slowly, they don’t have the mental energy needed to remember what they read. Many, many research projects have shown that repeated oral assisted reading, without specific attention to decoding or comprehension, improves both decoding and comprehension.

I think ROAR improves word identification (decoding) because children see and hear words over and over, in similar sentences in many books. Comprehension is improved because faster, easier reading allows them to focus on the meaning of what they read.

“My child says ROAR is boring. What can I do to get him to practice with me?”

Set up a reward system. So many minutes of play time, credit toward a toy/game he wants, etc. in exchange for practice time with you. Remember that all of us avoid things that we find hard to do. When reading is easier, he will want to read without needing rewards.

“How long will it be before we see some improvement?”

Most children and parents notice that reading is easier after a couple of months of regular practice. If he is still needing many repetitions of individual sentences after that time, check with your school’s reading specialist. You may need to use easier reading books for a while.

“My child seems to be just memorizing specific books. How will this help him read different books?”

Although it seems to be just memorization at first, you will see that reading improvement transfers to new material. The reason is because many, many books share similar sentence patterns and words so practicing begins to transfer to new material.

“My child has failed at reading so long that he believes he cannot get better. How can I convince him to give ROAR a try?”

I find that a sports analogy works with most kids. I explain that ROAR is like learning to play a new sport: First, you watch the older kids or coach demonstrate a play; Next, you practice with someone who plays better than you; and last, you try the play alone. If you need more practice you repeat the sequence with a coach. Learning to read is like learning to play basketball.

