

# SCOTT PSYCHOLOGY TIMES

Your Source for School Psychology Ideas and Insights

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## Effective Reading Instruction in the Early Grades

Effective reading instruction in the early grades can prevent reading difficulties for many children who might otherwise be referred for remedial or special education programs. Here are some of the basics to consider:

### Mechanics of Reading Kindergarten

Instruction should focus on:

- the sound structure of words
- the recognition and production of letters
- knowledge about print concepts
- familiarity with the basic purposes and mechanisms of reading and writing

### First Grade

Instruction should be designed to provide explicit instruction and practice with:

- sound structures that lead to phonemic awareness
- familiarity with spelling-sound correspondences and common spelling conventions and their use in identifying printed words
- "sight" recognition of frequent words
- independent reading, including reading aloud

A wide variety of well-written and engaging texts below the children's frustration level should be provided.

### Second Grade and Above

Instruction for children who have started to read independently, typically second graders and above, should focus on teaching children to:

- sound out and confirm the identities of visually unfamiliar words they encounter in the course of reading meaningful text
- recognize words primarily through attention to their letter-sound relationships

Although context and pictures can be used as a tool to monitor word recognition, children should not be taught to use them to substitute for information provided by the letters in the word.

### Reading Comprehension Kindergarten

Instruction should be designed to stimulate verbal interaction that teaches vocabulary and encourages talk about books.

### Early Grades

Beginning in the earliest grades, instruction should promote comprehension by actively building linguistic and conceptual knowledge in a rich variety of domains.

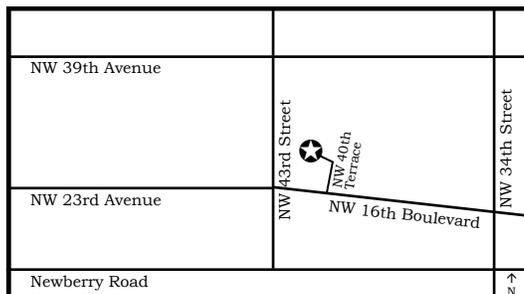
Throughout the early grades, reading curricula should include explicit instruction on strategies such as summarizing the main idea, predicting events and outcomes of upcoming text, drawing inferences, and monitoring for coherence and misunderstandings. This instruction can take place while adults read to students or when students read themselves.

Conceptual knowledge and comprehension strategies should be regularly assessed in the classroom, permitting timely and effective instructional response where difficulty or delay is apparent.

*Adapted from Reading Rockets: Toolkit for School Psychologists, Greater Washington Educational Telecommunications Association, Inc.*

## Dr. Scott's New Office

Dr. Scott has a new office location and phone number. Please update your records. She looks forward to working with you from the new location!



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Office Hours by Appointment

## Just a Thought...

Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.

—Richard Steele

The greatest gift is a passion for reading.

—Elizabeth Hardwick

## Online Resource

[www.fcrr.org](http://www.fcrr.org)



The Florida Center for Reading Research offers information on reading curriculum, instruction and assessment, and professional development. The site has terrific resources on these topics as well as research-based interventions for struggling readers.

# Intervention Central

## Classroom Interventions for Struggling Students

### Phonics Intervention Strategy: Letter-Sound Correspondence

Understanding phonics is a key part of learning to read. Children who know the sounds of letters and letter combinations are able to decode words as they read. It also helps them put together the right letters when spelling. This intervention targets phonics skills.

**Activity Name:** Digraph Roll-a-Word

**Target:** Grades 2 and 3

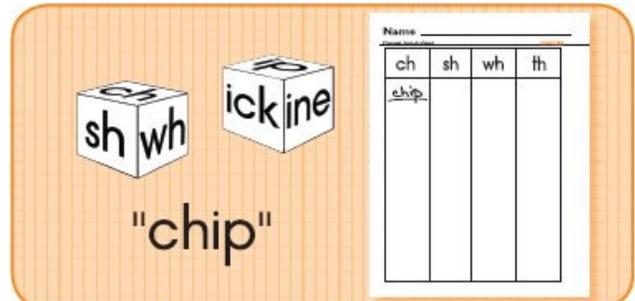
**Objective:** Students make words using digraph onset and rime letter cubes.

**Materials (using Activity Masters referenced below):**

- Onset cube — labeled with the digraphs: *ch, sh, th, wh, th, ch*
- Rime cube — labeled with the rimes: *at, op, in, ip, ine, ick*
- Student sheet
- Pencils

**Activity:**

- Place the cubes on a flat surface. Provide each student with a student sheet.
- Taking turns, students roll each cube. Arrange cubes so the onset (digraph) cube is placed to the left of the rime cube.
- Blend the onset and rime, and say the word (e.g., /ch/ /ip/, "chip").



- Write the word (nonsense or real) under the appropriate onset column. Underline the real words and put an "X" through the nonsense words.
- Continue the activity until all possible words have been made.
- Point to and read the real words in each column.
- Teacher evaluation

**Extensions and Adaptations:** Make other cubes with blends to make words.

**More Information:** Free activity masters and other activities available at [www.fcrr.org/Curriculum/PDF/G2-3/bookOnePhonicsPartOne.pdf](http://www.fcrr.org/Curriculum/PDF/G2-3/bookOnePhonicsPartOne.pdf).

*From Second and Third Grade Student Center Activities, Florida Center for Reading Research, [www.fcrr.org](http://www.fcrr.org).*

### Characteristics of Effective Interventions

Scientific research on reading has identified a number of important characteristics of effective interventions for students who are at-risk for reading difficulties.

Interventions:

- Should be offered as soon as it is clear the student is lagging behind in the development of skills or knowledge critical to reading growth.
- Must significantly increase the intensity of instruction and practice, which is accomplished primarily by increasing instructional time, reducing the size of the instructional group, or doing both.
- Must provide the opportunity for explicit (direct) and systematic instruction and

practice along with cumulative review to ensure mastery.

- Must provide skillful instruction including good error correction procedures, along with many opportunities for immediate positive feedback and reward.
- Must be guided by, and responsive to, data on student progress.
- Must be motivating, engaging, and supportive—a positive atmosphere is essential.

*Adapted from Intensive Reading Interventions for Struggling Readers in Early Elementary School: A Principal's Guide, Center on Instruction, [www.centeroninstruction.org](http://www.centeroninstruction.org).*

### Scott Psychology Times

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Dr. Scott (FL SS840) works with pre-k through college-aged students to diagnose learning disabilities, attention disorders, developmental delays, autism/Asperger's, and other learning and behavior challenges. She also does gifted evaluations and consults with parents, teachers, and other professionals to enhance children's educational outcomes.

If you have comments or would like to receive *Scott Psychology Times* electronically, please e-mail Dr Scott ([drscott@scottpsychology.com](mailto:drscott@scottpsychology.com)).

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