

Considerations When Planning Literacy Instruction for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

Students with intellectual disabilities can obtain higher levels of reading achievement. However, deficits in working memory can make learning early reading skills more difficult. These students should receive:



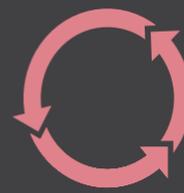
Comprehensive evidence-based instruction in all five components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.



More intensive, explicit, and systematic instruction.



Intervention that is individualized and occurs over an extended period.



Lots of consistent practice in skills until learned to mastery.



Cognitive processing and behavior modification strategies, as needed.

10 Research-based Tips



Plan

Keep big-picture goals in mind as you plan.

Ensure you have a clear picture of the student's current skills and set meaningful, measurable goals.

Goal



Instruction

Use an evidence-based core reading program and align supplemental materials to this program as needed.

Provide intervention with sufficient intensity to accomplish goals.

Intensity



Professional Development

Seek out professional development opportunities to deepen understanding of the complex process of learning to read.

Remember that language abilities are the underlying foundation for reading skills.

Language



Scaffolding

Support working memory with images, objects, letters, and words.

Target specific parts of a scope-and-sequence to focus instruction.

Target



Data

Use data to guide instruction and adaptations.

Partner with service providers and family members to assist in adding more practice of learned skills.

Partner



Lemons, C. J., Allor, J. H., Al Otaiba, S., & LeJeune, L. M. (2016). 10 Research-Based Tips for Enhancing Literacy Instruction for Students With Intellectual Disability. *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, 49(1), 18–30. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0040059916662202>