How to Help Struggling Readers and Writers

It can be overwhelming to learn that your child has trouble with reading or writing, and it is often not made clear to parents what should be done to help. Tutoring or pull-out support is often suggested, but research shows that **academic intervention** is the most helpful approach. This guide explains what effective academic intervention is and how to compare common approaches to reading and writing support.

What Effective Intervention Looks Like

- Clear identification of the child's specific reading or writing skill gaps, based on a focused assessment
- Instruction grounded in evidence-based reading and writing research
- Structured, skill-based plan with clear goals
- Regular measurement and review of progress using data
- Progress should be visible within weeks to months

Red Flags to Watch For

- The provider cannot explain which specific reading or writing skills are being targeted
- The approach is vague or not clearly evidence-based
- Sessions focus mainly on homework completion rather than teaching missing skills
- Progress is not measured or reviewed
- Support continues without reassessment or updated goals

Comparing Common Reading & Writing Support Approaches

	Science of Reading & Writing	Orton-Gillingham (OG)	Tutoring
Main Focus	Missing reading and writing skills	Starting from basics	Completing or keeping up with homework
Method	Teaching missing skills	Following a program	Varies widely
Foundation	Research on a broad range of reading and writing interventions	Research on a specific program	Varies widely
Assessment	Always guided by focussed skill assessment	Often, but not always	Typically not
Flexibility	Very High - tailored to gaps	Moderate - follows a defined sequence	High - driven by schoolwork
Duration	Planned and defined	Longer term, often without a clear end	Often open-ended
Best for...	Persistent reading/writing difficulty or learning disabilities	Some students with dyslexia	General support

Note: Orton-Gillingham (OG) is one instructional approach informed by reading research. Current evidence supports focusing on evidence-based instructional principles and progress monitoring rather than adherence to a single branded method.

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