

## How do I improve a child's reading ability?

Often, low reading ability in children seven to ten years old can be traced to two causes: lack of confidence and/or poor fluency. Some children have never become convinced that they are readers. Other children read with such poor fluency that they lose interest, or they don't like "how the book sounds." Occasionally, children may read fluently, but may have poor comprehension because they aren't visualizing (making pictures in their head) but just working hard at decoding words.

There are some things that you can do that may help to solve these problems.

1. Go back to reading some favorite "easy readers," or high interest, low vocabulary, chapter books. Favorite is the key term here. The child must like the book!
2. Modeling reading aloud is very important for children to hear. Once your student has heard you read and model the skills below, then have them practice these skills:

- ❖ Reading with fluency
- ❖ Using character voices (they love this!)
- ❖ Varying the pace of the reading
- ❖ Reading with emotion

Help your student with punctuation stops. Show them how you pause when you come to a comma, or a period at the end of a sentence. When reading a sentence with a question mark or an exclamation point, model, by reading it aloud, to demonstrate what it sounds like.

When reading with a child who is fluent, but lacks comprehension skills, it is important to stop for frequent comprehension checks. Ask the child to tell you what is happening on that page, to describe the action or character, or predict what they think will happen next.