

# WAYS TO DEVELOP YOUR CHILD'S BRAIN FOR READING SUCCESS

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Many children struggle with reading, but there are ways parents can help prevent reading difficulties.

Reading researcher, [Dr Jennifer Buckingham](#) estimates that as many as 1 million children in Australia are at risk of reading failure.

We know from scientific research that the ability to read is one of the most complex skills we can learn.

According to reading research organisations in Australia and overseas, including [The Centre for Independent Studies](#) in Australia, the [National Reading Panel](#) (USA), and the USA National Institute for Literacy, there are some critical skills for learning to read.

These include the reading skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, as well as the cognitive skills of memory, attention, processing and sequencing..

Dr. Paula Tallal, a world-recognised authority on language-learning disabilities and a founder of the [Center for Molecular and Behavioral Neuroscience at Rutgers University](#) published a 10 point list in [The Science of Learning Blog](#) so parents can help their school-age children develop and fine-tune essential reading skills at home.

Here are her 10 points:

1. Phonemic awareness

Teach your child rhymes, songs and short poems. And play word games (e.g. “How many words can you rhyme with mat?”).

2. Phonics

Help young children practice the alphabet by pointing out letters whenever they see them. e.g. point to street signs as ask your child to name the letters.

For older children, play games like, “How many words can you make with the letters in 'elephant'?”

3. Fluency: Encourage your children to read aloud.

4. Vocabulary; Take every opportunity to teach the meaning of words. Show older children how to use a dictionary, or the thesaurus in Word.

5. Comprehension: Help children find time to read for pleasure. Help them select books that interest them. Discuss what you are reading with your children.

6. Memory: Engage children in [memory](#) games like ‘Concentration’. Encourage them to re-tell stories help improve their memory skills.

7. Attention: Have your children set time goals for sticking to a task, like doing homework or reading quietly. Create an environment as free as possible of distractions, like TV or video games.

8. Processing: Play listening games to improve [auditory processing](#). An example is: “when I say words, tell me when you hear an ‘s’ sound (like the 's' sounds in “hissing snake”).

9. Sequencing: For young children, create picture stories in which the order of the images is used to tell the story,

10. Early intervention: “The final and perhaps most important thing that parents can do to help their kids develop a reading brain is to recognise that reading problems require intervention,” says Dr. Tallal.

“Early intervention is important, especially with the aid of scientifically-based reading intervention programs that target different areas of reading instruction, but it’s never too late to help children become better readers.”