

# I'm Concerned About My Child's Reading Progress: How Can I Get More Support?

November 7, 2025

Dear families,

We were grateful to connect with many of you at our recent family conferences. During your conference, you likely discussed your child's strengths and needs as a reader.

If your child is struggling with reading, we are here to help. Below, we answer a few questions you may have if you are concerned about your child's reading progress.

We're eager to work with you to help your child meet their reading goals. Please reach out to your child's teacher or to our Parent Coordinator, Mrs. Zaccheo, (TZaccheo@schools.nyc.gov) directly if you have questions or would like to discuss your child's progress.

With gratitude,  
Mrs. Smalley

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## **1. What if my child needs more support to read on grade level?**

If your child is not yet reading on grade level, they may need support with specific foundational reading skills. If your child needs more support with specific skills, your child's teacher will provide it, for example, in small group instruction. If your child is not yet reading on grade level, it may also mean the skills being tested have not yet been taught in class. Your child's teacher will help you understand if that is the case.

## **2. What if my child is learning to speak and read in English?**

Talk with your child's teacher about what your child knows in their home language. For example, share if your child can recognize rhymes, knows their letters, can read, can write, and more in their home language. Your child may be eligible for additional support

(including bilingual learning environments) if English is not their first language. Talk to your child's teacher or the parent coordinator to learn more about your options.

**3. My child's teacher said my child will participate in a small group for reading. Does this mean my child is receiving special education services?**

No. Participating in a small group for reading does not mean your child is receiving special education services. Teachers use small group instruction to tailor learning to students' needs. In some cases, students who receive small group instruction are those receiving special education services, and in other cases, they are not. Contact your school if you want to understand more about small group instruction.

**4. I think my child may need special education services. What should I do?**

You can request that your child receive a special education evaluation to determine if they need special education services. To do so, submit a written request to any staff member at your child's school. The request should include: a statement that you are requesting a special education evaluation, your concerns about your child's learning and development, any learning services your child has received or is receiving, your child's name and date of birth, your name and contact information, and your preferred language. If you need support in writing this request, reach out to your child's teacher or principal. This [video from Understood.org](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fryc4GpGbq0) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fryc4GpGbq0>), a nonprofit organization focused on supporting children with thinking and learning differences, provides guidance on how to request a special education evaluation.

Your request is not a guarantee that your child will receive special education services. After you make the request, specialists at your child's school will evaluate your child to understand whether they need special education services, and if so, what type of services are needed.

**5. I do not want my child to receive special education services. My child's teacher said they might need them. What should I do?**

Your child cannot receive special education services without your consent. If your child has never received special education services, you will be asked to provide your consent before services begin; if you prefer that your child does not receive services, do not provide your consent. If your child is already receiving services, you can withdraw consent, in writing, at any time. If you have questions, reach out to your child's school.

**6. I want to talk to someone outside of my school about my concerns about my child's reading progress. Who can I talk to?**

If you'd like to talk to someone outside of your school about your child's reading progress, you may want to start with your school district team. NYCPS district staff often include reading specialists and special education experts. Contact your district office for additional information about who might be able to provide support. If you're not sure what school district you are part of, ask your child's school.

In addition, a number of organizations across the city provide information and support for families whose children are struggling with reading (or other school subjects).

- [Advocates for Children](https://advocatesforchildren.org/) (<https://advocatesforchildren.org/>)
- [Dyslexia Alliance for Black Children](https://www.dyslexiaallianceforblackchildren.org/) (<https://www.dyslexiaallianceforblackchildren.org/>)
- [IncludeNYC](https://includenyc.org/help-center/) (<https://includenyc.org/help-center/>)
- [Legal Aid Society Education Advocacy Project / Education Law Project](https://legalaidsnyc.org/programs-projects-units/education-advocacy-and-law-projects/) (<https://legalaidsnyc.org/programs-projects-units/education-advocacy-and-law-projects/>)
- [Legal Services NYC](https://www.legalservicesnyc.org/) (<https://www.legalservicesnyc.org/>)
- [Understood.org](https://www.understood.org/) (<https://www.understood.org/>)