

Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children (1998). The National Academies' Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (CBASSE)

Influence Index: 29

Citation

Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children, the Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, and the National Research Council. (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Description

The National Academy of Sciences established the Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (CBASSE) at the request of the U.S Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in order to examine the prevention of reading difficulties in young children.

The Commission reviewed research on topics related to the development of reading and reading outcomes. This included reading development and instruction for students making normal progress. In addition, the Commission also considered factors that put groups and individuals at risk for reading difficulties, as well as prevention and intervention strategies that might promote positive reading outcomes among such at-risk groups. This base of research knowledge was considered alongside a such contextual factors as: policies related to the education of young children, pressures on publishers of educational materials, and parent and community programs. The Commission's goal was to devise an integrated perspective on reading development and translate its findings into guidance for a variety of audiences that include educators, parents, and publishers.

In 1998 the Commission released a report entitled, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* that describes factors related to normal reading development. Findings suggest that key factors that help children to read include: exposure to enriching experiences in early childhood, promoting motivation related to reading, and attendance at schools that provide effective reading instruction. The report also cites typical obstacles to this development, one common risk factor being the lack of access to preschool experiences and instruction related to reading. Obstacles to reading not associated with specific risk factors include difficulty with the alphabetic principle, an inability to translate language skills into reading, and a lack of motivation.

Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children contained recommendations for providing effective reading instruction to children in the primary grades. Among the wide-ranging issues addressed were: the components of effective reading instruction, resources complementing effective instruction, and the more general need for high-quality preschool and kindergarten environments. Recommendations covered interventions for children at risk and the challenges facing students with persistent reading difficulties, particularly English Language Learners. The Commission also called attention to teacher preparation as a critical ingredient for high-quality instruction and such school organization factors as class size and student-teacher ratio. Although the study concludes that most reading difficulties can be prevented, further progress in this area requires continuing research and better dissemination of current information related to effective reading instruction.

For More Information

Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children is available from the National Academy Press at www.nap.edu.