



Provide intensive, systematic instruction on up to three foundational reading skills in small groups to students who score below the benchmark on universal screening



Typically, these groups meet between three and five times a week for 20 to 40 minutes (tier 2). Tier 2 interventions are provided only to students who demonstrate problems based on screening measures or weak progress from regular classroom instruction. These students receive supplemental, small-group reading instruction aimed at building foundational reading skills. The small groups should be homogenous and range from three to four students, using targeted curricula in one of the components of reading instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency).



How to carry out the recommendation

1. Use a curriculum that addresses the components of reading instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency) and relates to students' needs and developmental level.
2. Implement this program three to five times a week, for approximately 20 to 40 minutes.
3. Build skills gradually and provide a high level of teacher-student interaction with opportunities for practice and feedback.

Potential roadblocks

1. Some teachers or reading specialists might worry about aligning the tier 2 intervention program with the core program.
2. Finding an additional 15 to 50 minutes a day for additional reading instruction can be a daunting task.

Reference: Gersten, R., Compton, D., Connor, C. M., Dimino, J., Santoro, L., Linan-Thompson, S., & Tilly, W. D. (2008). *Assisting students struggling with reading: Response to Intervention and multi-tier intervention for reading in the primary grades* (NCEE 2009-4045). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/3>



How to carry out the recommendation

1. Use a curriculum that addresses the components of reading instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency) and relates to students' needs and developmental level.

Use standard protocols (tutoring programs for all students whose ability is assessed as below a given benchmark) that address foundational skills and strategies essential for learning to read. The suggested duration is at least five weeks, after which some students may have caught up while others may need further intervention. The foundational curriculum should be aligned with the school's core reading program and have evidence-based research to prove their effectiveness.

Foundational reading skills in grades K–2

Grade	Skill
Kindergarten	Phonemic awareness Letter sounds Listening comprehension Vocabulary development
Grade 1	Phonemic awareness Phonics Fluency (high frequency words) Fluency with connected text (second half of the year) Vocabulary Comprehension
Grade 2	Phonics Fluency with connected text Vocabulary Comprehension

Note. Taken from page 21 of the practice guide referenced on the first page of this document.

Intervention curricula should include important activities such as the following:

- Literal comprehension (questions whose answers are stated in the text).
- More sophisticated comprehension strategies (summarizing a portion of text).
- Listening comprehension strategies.
- Spelling.
- Expressive writing.
- Read-alouds.

Additionally, the activities focusing on literal comprehension and some rudimentary comprehension instruction occur in many successful interventions. Other elements, such as inferential comprehension and vocabulary development, may be better developed with more heterogeneous groups during a reading language arts block. Interventions should be targeted, as an intervention curriculum that covers five to six skills per day may not provide the intensity necessary to improve reading achievement.

2. Implement this program three to five times a week, for approximately 20 to 40 minutes.

Remember that students' grade levels and needs should always determine the length and duration of an intervention. An intervention session can range from 20–30 minutes for kindergarten students and up to 40–50 minutes for grade 2 students, depending on the needs of the student. Providing 20 minutes of instruction daily in kindergarten has been shown to have a positive impact on the acquisition of early reading skills (e.g., phonemic awareness and letter-sound correspondence). As students move into grades 1 and 2, the time needed for interventions usually increases as the skills they need to catch up on broaden.

Research suggests that critical aspects of instruction include how time is spent and proportioned. Thus, the time spent on each area of instruction might be more important than total instructional time. For example, merely doubling instructional time for an intervention is not effective, but doubling instructional time while adjusting the percentage of time allotted to each instructional area in response to students' changing needs results in better outcomes on timed oral reading fluency and word reading measures.

3. Build skills gradually and provide a high level of teacher-student interaction with opportunities for practice and feedback.

Instruction should be systematic, building skills gradually. It should begin with introducing skills in isolation and then integrating them with other skills. Feedback should be clear and should correct errors before they become habits. Cumulative review is necessary for developing understanding and mastery. There should also be a high level of teacher-student interaction, with the teacher explicitly explaining and modeling as well as allowing frequent opportunities for students to practice while receiving targeted, corrective feedback. Additionally, think-alouds should be incorporated into instruction whenever possible.

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Potential roadblocks and how to address them

Roadblock	Suggested Approach
<i>Some teachers or reading specialists might worry about aligning the tier 2 intervention program with the core program.</i>	Building foundational skills in a systematic and explicit way, determined by the students' needs and rate of progress, is more critical than alignment.
<i>Finding an additional 15 to 50 minutes a day for additional reading instruction can be a daunting task.</i>	Small-group instruction could occur, for example, when other students are working independently at classroom learning centers. In classrooms with no direct instructional time, intervention lessons can occur at times that do not conflict with other critical content areas. Additionally, a classroom may have a longer reading block where it is appropriate for students to work at learning stations or complete assignments while the classroom teacher is conducting tier 2 interventions to meet students' needs.



For more information on the research evidence and references to support this recommendation, or for more detailed explanation from the What Works Clearinghouse committee who developed this recommendation, please refer to the practice guide cited at the bottom of the first page of this document.