



# READING RECOVERY: THE FACTS

## A MESSAGE FROM THE NORTH AMERICAN READING RECOVERY TRAINERS

*Reading Recovery® teaching reflects the complexity of early literacy learning. As with many areas of specialized study, inaccuracies may occur. This document represents the facts about Reading Recovery to use as a resource to check misinformation.*

### Reading Recovery Is Not

Reading Recovery  
**IS NOT**  
a classroom program.

Reading Recovery provides tutoring that is additional to classroom instruction for first grade children who are having difficulty learning to read. The individual tutoring of reading, writing, and phonics is systematic, explicit and intensive. Documented in the national data collected annually on every Reading Recovery child served, the evidence clearly demonstrates that Reading Recovery works successfully with any high-quality instructional program provided by the classroom teacher.

Reading Recovery  
**IS NOT**  
“Whole Language”.

“Whole Language” is a philosophy of education that was influential on classroom reading and writing programs in the 1980s and 1990s. It brought attention to the importance of language and high-quality books in classroom instruction. It was widely misunderstood, not adequate, and not related to the instruction in the Reading Recovery tutorial. Reading Recovery tutoring is based on a completely different theory of how children learn to read and on decades of research evidence that reveals the complex way readers process information in the brain. In Reading Recovery, the young reader learns to decode words with accuracy and read with fluency and understanding.

Reading Recovery  
**DOES NOT**  
teach children to guess.

Children in Reading Recovery are taught to decode words accurately and read for understanding. While each child’s prior knowledge contributes to checking on and comprehending their reading, phonemic awareness and phonics instruction teach children a system for decoding unknown words proficiently and quickly while reading. This system becomes more complex over time as readers meet new challenges in more difficult books.

Reading Recovery  
**IS NOT**  
a published commercial  
curriculum.

Reading Recovery is not a commercial, for-profit program. Reading Recovery’s trademark is a guarantee of both high-quality training for teachers and research-based instruction for each child having extreme difficulty learning to read and write in grade one. Teachers choose from a wide range of instructional materials based on daily observations and evidence of what the child knows and needs to learn next.

**Reading Recovery**  
**IS NOT**  
**a one-size-fits-all.**

Specially trained Reading Recovery teachers design daily, individualized, one-to-one lessons based on each child's current reading and writing, and yes, phonics skills. Teachers assess and adjust the child's instruction using high-quality books, and materials to develop letter-sound understandings, phonics, and word knowledge. Children delight in their Reading Recovery teachers' attention to their strengths and needs and thrive in this 30-minute instructional format.

**Reading Recovery**  
**IS NOT**  
**a long-term, remedial program.**

Reading Recovery is a short-term, preventative intervention for first graders experiencing extreme difficulty with reading and writing. Instead of waiting for the child to fail, Reading Recovery intervenes in grade one. In just 12 to 20 weeks of daily 30-minute lessons, children make faster-than-average progress, ready to take advantage of good classroom reading, writing, and phonics instruction and continue to learn with their classmates.

## Reading Recovery Is

**Reading Recovery**  
**IS ✓**  
**a one-to-one, early intervention for reading and writing.**

Reading Recovery is designed to prevent young children from years of difficulty in reading and writing. When 30-minute daily lessons are provided to the first-grade children who have the most difficulty learning to read and write, the research evidence demonstrates that approximately 70 percent of students achieve success in approximately 12-20 weeks and can take advantage of classroom instruction to continue to learn. The small number of children who do not make enough progress in the short-term intervention benefit from the weeks of systematic diagnosis and are identified for further evaluation of their ongoing needs.

**Reading Recovery**  
**IS ✓**  
**a short-term, evidence-based intervention for the lowest performing first grade literacy learners.**

Reading Recovery intervenes early to develop reading, writing, and foundational literacy skills, so children do not experience years of failure. The first graders with the most difficulty are provided daily, systematic, 30-minute tutoring by a specially trained teacher for approximately 12-20 weeks. Systematic, individualized instruction is based on daily evidence of children's performance and is provided in addition to a high-quality classroom reading, writing and phonics program.

**Reading Recovery**  
**IS ✓**  
**designed to work with any**  
**classroom literacy program.**

Reading Recovery does not replace the classroom program, the primary source of literacy instruction for all children, but works as a secondary intervention. Reading Recovery provides a short-term intervention of no more than 20 weeks to accelerate children's progress in reading and writing and prepare them to participate successfully in the classroom program. Familiar with classroom teachers' expectations, Reading Recovery teachers assist students with the process of joining their average peers ready to meet expectations of the classroom program.

**Reading Recovery**  
**DOES ✓**  
**teach children to use**  
**phonics skills.**

Reading Recovery procedures involve explicit and systematic instruction in phonics and word analysis skills across the lesson in reading, writing, and hands-on activities. Children learn the foundational skills to develop a reader's complex literacy processing system. Research-based procedures address phonemic awareness, letter identification and discrimination, phonics, and advanced skills to decode unknown words when reading, and hearing and recording sounds in words when writing.

**Reading Recovery**  
**DOES ✓**  
**build on children's strengths**  
**and responds to individual**  
**learning differences.**

Every first-grade literacy learner is unique. Reading Recovery teachers tailor instruction to the student. Knowledge of letters, letter-sound links, words, print concepts, and text reading are assessed in detail. Teachers analyze reading and writing strengths, note individual learning differences, and design individual lessons that support every child's acquisition of reading, writing, and phonics skills using a range of interesting books, manipulatives, magnetic letters, and other specially selected materials.

**Reading Recovery**  
**DOES ✓**  
**collect and report literacy**  
**assessment scores on every**  
**participating child.**

A key element of Reading Recovery is the careful monitoring of every child's literacy progress. Teachers assess and analyze the child's reading, writing, and phonics skills and use this information to design precisely tailored daily lessons. Assessment data are used to communicate with families and the classroom teacher to ensure seamless coordination of instruction and literacy success. Assessment data collected at the school and district levels inform program delivery and school improvement with the goal of every child becoming a reader and writer.

**Learn more About Reading Recovery, Descubriendo la Lectura & Intervention préventive en lecture-écriture at:**

**[ReadingRecovery.org](http://ReadingRecovery.org)**