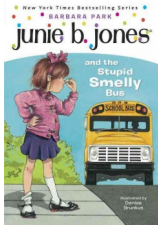


What really matters for struggling readers : designing research-based programs

# Ways To Help Your School-Age Child with Reading



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It seems like a basic concept, a "no-brainer" if you will: the more you read, the better you get at it. But it was good to be reminded of this proven fact at the Literacy Summit sponsored by the Monroe County Community School Corporation last week. Dr. Richard Allington, Professor of Education at the University of Tennessee was one of the featured speakers. He underscored research demonstrating that the number of minutes spent reading outside of school directly correlates to how well you read. Like anything else, reading takes practice to get good at it. A former elementary school classroom teacher before beginning his career as a teacher educator and instructional researcher, Allington also emphasized the importance of allowing children to choose for themselves what to read. "Students must have choice along with interesting texts -- things they want to read," he said.

Many of the points he made at his presentation are echoed in his book: *What Really Matters for Struggling Readers*. "Kids not only need to read a lot but they also need many books they can read accurately, fluently, and with comprehension right at their fingertips. They also need access to books that entice them to read." (pg. 96) ...Books like Junie B. Jones by Barbara Park. Allington shared that he gets books in the Junie B. Jones series for his granddaughter who has finished kindergarten and is ready for more independent reading. Allington assures teachers and parents that children who only want to read books from a particular series should be encouraged to do so. "I would argue that it may be the time spent reading series books, and even other mediocre books, that creates the skill and interest necessary to read the better-quality books. Lots of reading, including repeated readings of favorite texts, is important in the development of fluency."

So keep these key points from Allington in mind when your child seeks out all the *Fly Guy* stories, or can't wait for that next *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* book, or only wants *Magic Tree House* stories:

- Reading volume is critical to reading success
- Access and choice foster reading motivation

This last point especially caught my attention: **Access and choice foster reading motivation.** This sums up in a nutshell what your public library is all about. Access to a wide range of books just waiting for you to come in and choose which one to read next. (And in some cases, you don't even have to come in to the building to gain access! Even Junie B. Jones is available now in an ebook format!) For additional tips on how you might encourage your child's development as a free, voluntary reader, see our handout: [Ways to Help Your School-age Child with Reading.](#)  
Posted by Lisa C. on August 6, 2012

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