

Struggling Readers

- In an average class of 22 first-grade students, approximately five will struggle with reading.
- Of those five struggling readers, four will need either additional or more intensive instruction to remediate their skills.
- One of those four students will require even more intensive, individualized reading instruction.

These struggling readers are the ones who concern teachers and administrators. Of course, the numbers of struggling readers are different for each school, based on factors such as exposure to early literacy activities, quality of childcare and preschool programs, English-language proficiency, parental income levels, and quality of reading instruction. But on average, across the country, about 25% of the students in the early grades require additional support to learn to read.

Students who struggle with reading in the early grades will eventually struggle with all academic areas because the curriculum in upper grades relies more and more on independent reading skills. On average, 25% (typically ranging between 20% and 30%) of schoolchildren in the early grades struggle with reading. The actual percentages vary widely, depending on the unique characteristics of the students and the quality of instruction in each school. It is important to remember that, regardless of the causes of academic difficulty, research has demonstrated effective methods for providing early reading support to these students. Because reading is such an essential skill, this module and the modules in this series will focus on reading; however, the models and approaches discussed can be utilized with other academic skills and behaviors.

FYI

- Approximately 40% of students across the nation cannot read at a basic level.
- Almost half the students living in urban areas cannot read at a basic level.
- Almost 70% of low-income fourth-grade students cannot read at a basic level.

(U.S. Department of Education, 2004)