

- 1. Be Your Child's Scribe.** Sometimes, the act of writing can get in the way of learning. If your child is struggling to complete written homework, have them dictate answers to you. Write a note at the top of the page that says "dictated to me by my student." You can also use dictation software, which enables your child to speak into a microphone and have their voice translated to text.

- 2. Choose the Right Reading Material.** Eliminate reading frustration by making sure your child's reading material is not too difficult. Have your child read a page aloud to you. If they are able to read 95% or more of the words on the page, they are reading the right material. Any less than that and the book is too difficult – leading to frustration and insufficient comprehension. While your child is building skills, it is best to choose a book that your child can master and enjoy, even if it is below their grade level.

- 3. Rethink the Bedtime Routine.** Many parents save nightly reading time for bedtime. For a child with reading struggles, bedtime (when the child is tired) is the worst time to read independently. Encourage your child to read earlier in the day, when they are fresh.

- 4. Watch What You Say.** Be careful with the words you use when you are helping your child. Even if they are said with the best of intentions, certain phrases can be discouraging for a struggling reader:
 - Just sound it out
 - You know that word
 - That's an easy one
 - We just read that word
 - That was on the spelling test last weekUntil your child receives the services they need to learn to decode properly, provide them with the answer so that decoding does not impede learning.

- 5. Take Breaks.** Breaking up study time actually increases productivity. For elementary school students, break up homework into no more than 15-minute segments. During break time, have your child do something active – like jumping rope, playing with a pet, or running around outside. Use break time to refuel with a snack. For an interesting article about the importance of taking breaks, check out <http://bit.ly/WgLeXG>.

6. Make Learning Fun. Turn studying into a game to take some of the pressure off. Here are some ideas:

- Put vocabulary words on a hopscotch board
- Put a dollop of shaving cream on a table and have your child write their spelling words with their fingers. You'll provide a tactile learning experience and you'll end up with a clean, fresh-smelling table!
- Have your child work on math facts with bathtub crayons while bathing.

7. Make Car Time Count. Use time in the car to have your student teach you what they are learning. Give them permission to write vocabulary words, spelling words and math facts on car windows with dry erase markers.

8. Read Aloud to Your Child, No Matter the Age. Never stop reading to your child! Even if they struggle with the act of reading, they need to learn to enjoy books and stories. Reading aloud to your child will expand their vocabulary, which is critical to success in school and throughout life. Audio books are a very beneficial tool. Your local library should have a good collection of books on CD or audio book websites.

9. Communicate With Your Child's Teacher. Many kids are able to keep it together during the school day only to crumble when they come home. Make sure your child's teacher knows how much your child is struggling. You may need to ask the teacher to lighten the homework load (or make modifications such as reducing spelling lists, shortening independent reading requirements or reducing the number of math problems for homework) while you are looking for help.

10. BREATHE. Take some of the pressure off of yourself! Take things a step at a time and don't let your mind race and worry needlessly about the future. Take step-by-step actions to identify and remediate the problem but don't forget to enjoy your child and appreciate their many gifts!

