

Reading Failure

An extract from Chapter 14 of *How Children Learn to Read – Current Issues and New Directions in the Integration of Cognition, Neurobiology and Genetics of Reading* (Ed. Pugh & McCardle, 2010, Dyslexia Foundation)

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“Research has shown that for a number of children (i.e., 15-20%) basic reading skills do not develop or improve with time (e.g., Fletcher & Foorman, 1994; Francis, Shaywitz, Stuebing, Shaywitz and Fletcher. Children who fall behind in kindergarten and grade 1 fall further behind over time in reading and reading related areas (e.g., Lyon, 1995; Stanovich, 1986).

Clearly it is important to identify early the children at risk for dyslexia, and to provide an appropriate intervention. The accurate identification of children with reading difficulties at as early a time as possible is a central concern for society (e.g., Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). Due to the relationship between reading disability and negative life outcomes, it is critical that identification practices are accurate.

Reading failure has a negative impact on achievement in all academic areas, as well as extra-curricular activities and peer relations (e.g., Stanovich, 1986). With time, the disabled reader becomes unable to read age appropriate material, and, as a result, reads less, is less likely to enjoy reading as compared to successful readers (Blachman, 1996) and lags in vocabulary development and acquisition of knowledge.

A high prevalence of reading difficulties has been identified among adolescent homeless youth and adolescents who have committed suicide (Barwick & Siegel, 1996; McBride & Siegel, 1997). In addition to academic problems such as dropping out (e.g., Lichtenstein & Zantol-Wiener, 1988; National Center for Education Statistics, 1999) adolescents with learning disabilities are at increased risk of developing social problems (e.g.; Sabornie, 1994; Wiener & Schneider, 2002) and emotional difficulties such as depression (e.g., Gregg, Hoy, King, Moreland & Jagota, 1992). As well, this is a population at risk for problems with self-concept (e.g., Boetsch, Green, & Pennington, 1996; Chapman, 1988), juvenile delinquency and substance use and abuse (Beitman, Wilson, Douglas, Young & Adlaf, 2001).”