

Inclusive Developmental and Therapy Center

Reading, Writing & Spelling Help for School-Age Children

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✓ Can I help my child at home?

Yes, you really can. To help an older child read, spell and write with more confidence — ten focused minutes a day, taught in a clear order, without the tears and the nightly battles. This free program breaks it down into simple weekly steps, built from proven therapy techniques — things any parent can do at home, in everyday moments, at no cost. It doesn't replace a professional assessment where one is needed, but for a lot of children it makes a real difference, and it never does any harm.

Go at your own pace — a new, gentle focus each week.

Download the whole program as a printable PDF to keep.

Includes the signs that mean it's worth getting a bit of extra help.

Yes — a school-age child who reads slowly or spells badly can still make real progress at home. What works at seven, ten or thirteen is the same thing that works at five, only taught in an older child's words: breaking long words into chunks, sounding out instead of guessing, re-reading familiar text until it flows, and spelling by pattern rather than by memory. Ten focused minutes a day, in a fixed order, is the whole method — the same parent-led shape as the rest of our **free home programs for parents**, pitched here at an older reader.

If your child is bright, chatty and bursting with ideas but still trips over reading, spells the same word three different ways, or groans the second you say "writing", you're not imagining it — and it isn't laziness. Plenty of clever children find reading and spelling genuinely hard graft, and by school age they usually already know they're behind their friends. Honestly, that dent in their confidence often hurts more than the reading itself. Parents here often put it as "bacha parhai mein

kamzor hai” — my child is weak in studies — but a lack of effort and a real reading difficulty look nothing alike up close. If you want the background first, our guide to **how children learn to read, and why some struggle** explains what is actually breaking down.

Be realistic about the timeline. An older child usually needs longer to close a gap than a five-year-old would: there is more ground to make up, and more avoidance habits to unpick. Steady daily practice beats a heroic session at the weekend every time. This program sits alongside school — it doesn’t replace it — and it isn’t a diagnosis. If daily routines, independence and life skills are the bigger worry at the moment, start with **learning and life skills at home** and come back to reading afterwards. And if the difficulties keep going, a specialist assessment from an educational psychologist or specialist assessor can look properly at whether dyslexia or another learning difference is part of the picture, and give the school something concrete to act on — you can also **book a free consultation at our Multan centre** to talk through where your child is stuck.

1 — The whole word looks impossible

unhelpful



2 — Clap it into syllables

un help ful



3 — Name the parts, and the meaning follows

un- help -ful
beginning: not the root ending: full of

4 — Now say it back at speed: unhelpful

♥ Who this program is for

- ✓ Reads slowly, word by word, and keeps losing their place on the line.
- ✓ Guesses words from the first letter or the picture instead of sounding them out.
- ✓ Spells poorly — even common words, and even words they got right yesterday.

- ✓ Avoids, stalls or flat-out hates writing anything down.
- ✓ Reads the words correctly but can't tell you what the page was actually about.
- ✓ Is reasonably fluent in one language and badly stuck in the other — Urdu fine and English not, or the other way round.
- ✓ Will do almost anything to avoid reading aloud in front of the class or a sibling.
- ✓ Is clearly sharp in conversation, yet reading and writing sit well below their class.
- ✓ Has had a teacher mention dyslexia, extra support, or falling behind.

Important – when to get professional help

This is a supportive home program — it isn't a diagnosis, and it doesn't replace a proper assessment. Please speak to a professional soon if:

The gap between your child and their classmates keeps widening despite regular help at home and school.

After months of practice they still can't reliably give you the sounds for common letters and letter teams.

Real distress around school — stomach aches, tears before class, or refusing to go.

A family history of dyslexia, or of reading and spelling difficulties.

They're also wrestling with maths, attention or staying organised, not just reading.

Hearing and vision have never been properly checked — both are worth ruling out before anything else.

Their confidence is dropping and they've started calling themselves "stupid."

Getting help where you live

Everything here is free to use **anywhere in the world**. If you'd like a professional to take a closer look, the best next step is someone local to you:

Work with us online, from anywhere. We offer **online sessions and parent coaching** worldwide — book an online consultation and we'll guide you and your child directly.

Talk to your child's **doctor, paediatrician, GP or health visitor** — share what you noticed.

Ask about **free early-childhood or early-intervention services** in your area — many countries offer them for young children (e.g. Early Intervention in the US, NHS referrals in the UK).

Search **“child speech & language therapist near me”**, or ask your doctor for a referral.

Near Multan, Pakistan? You're also warmly welcome in person at our centre — **contact us here.**

☆ **Your step-by-step roadmap**

Move at your child's pace, not the calendar's — the “weeks” are just a gentle order, not a race. Feel free to repeat any stage for as long as it's helping.

Stage 1 – Breaking big words into chunks

A long word feels impossible when it's met whole. Show your child that every long word is really just small, manageable chunks — syllables — clapped out and split.

Clap out longer words together — “fan-tas-tic,” “re-mem-ber,” “cat-er-pil-lar” — one clap a beat, so they can actually hear the chunks.

Write a long word on paper, draw pencil lines between the syllables, and read it one chunk at a time before saying it at speed.

Play “squash and stretch”: stretch a word out slowly into its parts, then squash it back to normal pace.

⚡ **Try** Chin on the hand — count how many times the jaw drops as they say **this:** the word. Each drop is one syllable.

Stage 2 – Sounding out and blending

Older children still need reliable sounding-out, just with grown-up words. Blend the sounds left to right instead of guessing from the shape.

Practise the trickier letter teams — “ai, ee, igh, oa, ew, tion” — point to it, say the sound, then hunt for it inside a real word.

Read a few short decodable sentences at their level, finger running under each word, blending the sounds smoothly.

When they hit a hard word, cover it and reveal it sound by sound rather than just telling them what it says.

⚡ **Try** Cover the picture. If they can only read the word by peeking at the **this:** picture, they’re guessing — sound it out instead.

Stage 3 – Building reading fluency

Speed and smoothness come from re-reading, not from something new and harder every day. Familiar text lets the reading flow so the meaning can land.

Pick one short, comfortable passage and read it together three times across the week — a little quicker and smoother each time.

Try paired reading: read aloud together, then go quiet and let them carry on solo when they feel ready.

Take turns, a sentence each, so your child hears a smooth, expressive model right before their own go.

⚡ **Try** Time a re-read and celebrate the seconds saved. Beating their own **this:** record beats competing with anyone else.

Stage 4 – Spelling that sticks

Spelling grows with patterns and multisensory practice, not endless copying. Teach the “why” behind the letters and use routines for the tricky words.

Group the week’s spellings by pattern (“-igh,” “-tion,” doubling after a short vowel) rather than a random mixed list.

Use see–say–cover–write–check, and for tricky words trace the letters in the air, in sand or on their palm while saying them.

Highlight the “tricky bit” of a hard word in colour — the part they keep getting wrong — so their eyes learn exactly where the trap is.

⚡ **Try** Say the word the way it’s spelled — “Wed-nes-day,” “bus-i-ness” — to
this: remember the silent, sneaky letters.

Stage 5 – Word parts: prefixes, suffixes and roots

By this age most unfamiliar words are built from smaller meaningful parts. Teaching those parts hands your child a way to read, spell and understand words they have never seen before — the single biggest lever for an older struggling reader.

Take one word family a week — “play, played, playing, replay, player” — written in a column so the shared root jumps out.

Teach a handful of common beginnings and endings and what each one does to the meaning: un- (not), re- (again), pre- (before), -less (without), -ful (full of), -tion (turns it into a thing).

When a long word stumps them, cover the beginning and the ending, read the root on its own, then add the parts back on one at a time.

⚡ **Try** Ask “what root is hiding inside?” — spotting “sign” inside “signature”
this: explains the odd spelling and the meaning in one go.

Stage 6 – Getting ideas onto the page

Struggling writers often have brilliant ideas but freeze at the blank page. Split the thinking from the writing so spelling never blocks their story.

Plan out loud first — talk the whole answer through, or jot ideas as a quick spider-map before any full sentences.

Offer sentence starters (“First... Then... The reason is...”) so they begin instead of staring down the empty line.

Let them dictate while you scribe sometimes — capture their ideas in full, read it back, then let them copy or fix a part.

 **Try** Say the whole sentence out loud before writing it. If they can say it,
this: they can write it.

Stage 7 – Understanding and studying

Reading the words is only half the job. Build comprehension by previewing, questioning and checking that the meaning actually went in.

Before reading, preview together — look at the title, pictures and headings and predict what it’ll be about.

Pause at the end of each paragraph and ask a quick “what just happened / what does that mean?”

After reading, have them retell it in their own words, or sketch a quick picture, so you both know it landed.

 **Try** Turn each heading into a question, then read to find the answer. It
this: keeps a wandering mind hunting for meaning.

Little tricks that make it work

- ✓ Slide a plain card or a reading ruler under the line to hold their place. Coloured overlays suit some children
- ✓ Play the audiobook while they follow the same words in print. Ears and

and there is no harm in trying one, but the evidence for them is mixed — treat it as a comfort aid, never as the fix.

eyes together build reading without the struggle.

- ✓ Keep the book they read alone easier than the book you read to them. Their own reading builds fluency; your reading feeds vocabulary and ideas.
- ✓ Keep it little and often. Five to ten focused minutes a day beats one long, tearful battle at the weekend. If even five minutes of sitting still is the real battle, our school-age focus and organisation program is the better place to begin — practice needs attention before it needs phonics.
- ✓ Let them type or dictate when the job is thinking, and give handwriting its own short slot. Two hard things at once sinks most struggling writers.
- ✓ Praise the effort and the trying, not just the right answer. A brave go at a hard word deserves real credit.
- ✓ Cut the copying load — give a printed copy to stick in, or let them write less but write it well.

How you'll know it's working

- They pick up a book, or read a sign or a menu, without being nagged into it.
- Sounding out starts to replace wild guessing, and fewer words get skipped or swapped.
- Long words get attacked in chunks rather than abandoned at first glance.
- Spellings from the week's pattern begin turning up correctly in their own writing.
- The blank page brings fewer tears — they start a piece of writing with less coaxing.
- They can retell what they've just read without you asking twice, and homework needs fewer excuses.

- Progress at this age is slow and easy to miss, so write it down — our printable progress and goal tracker gives you a month-by-month record to compare against, rather than relying on memory.



Is this based on real methods? The steps here follow structured literacy — systematic, synthetic phonics taught in a clear order, multisensory (Orton-Gillingham-style) practice that links seeing, saying, hearing and writing, word-part (morphology) work for older readers, and repeated reading of familiar text to build fluency. These approaches are widely recognised as evidence-based for children who find reading and spelling hard, including those with dyslexia. This program is a home support, not an assessment or a treatment, and it makes no promises about how far or how fast any individual child will get; if difficulties persist, a specialist assessment can confirm what is going on and guide next steps.



Educational information, not a diagnosis. Our guidance follows standard, research-based practice (CDC, NHS, ASHA and WHO), is written by our therapy team and **medically reviewed by a GMC-registered doctor**. Every child is different, so we can't promise specific results — always use your own judgement and speak to a qualified professional about your child. **Read our full disclaimer.**

— FAQ

School-Age Reading & Writing: questions parents ask

