

## **Tips and Tools for School: Reading Challenges** by Mariola Strahlberg

Many children have difficulties with reading. And when children struggle with reading, it often affects other areas of their school work.

While working with many children and adults for the past 10 years, I've divided the many reading difficulties into three areas:

**Physical:** vision problems, not necessarily acuity, but tracking, sensitivity to light, poor eye muscle development and/or lack of movement during the school year

**Emotional:** related to stress and lack of sleep

**Developmental:** retained or lacking reflexes

These suggestions for improving physical and development challenges will help when reading isn't going well with your child:

**Sensitivity to light** caught my attention since I use color-light therapy with children. This condition is described as sensitivity to aspects of light involving brightness, wavelengths and dark/bright contrast.

At home, make sure that children study under natural or incandescent bulbs. Fluorescent bulbs are missing certain wavelengths and may cause stress on children's eyes.

Some children have difficulty with contrast of a white page with black letters. One of the ways to correct the problem is to introduce color overlays over the written page.

After testing many children and adults, I have noticed a substantial change in reading fluency, comprehension and stress level. Choosing color overlays takes about an hour. At the end of the process, it's obvious to the person being tested, if the overlay makes a difference or not.

**Tracking:** When you see your child tilting their head to one side while reading or writing, they are trying to compensate for a problem in eye tracking. Their acuity may be 20/20 but their eyes can't stay on the entire

line from one end to the other. Educational Kinesiology's Brain Gym® movements bring welcome relief to many children and they're easy to do.

**Developmental reflexes:** Many children show signs of retained dynamic reflexes (reflexes that should have disappeared in infancy or early childhood) and are also lacking certain postural reflexes. Some examples include using the tongue while reading or writing, rocking back and forth while sitting on a chair or tucking a foot under the buttocks or around the leg of a chair.

With the help from Educational Kinesiology's Brain Gym® movements and Dr. Svetlana Masgutova's Neurosensorimotor Method, integration of these reflexes is possible and can be done in a simple, fun and orderly fashion.