



Reading Difficulty

What is reading difficulty?

Reading with understanding is not a simple process. It requires many different skills.

Some of these skills include:

- Phonemic awareness (ability to process sounds in words)
- Phonics (knowledge of letter-sound relationship)
- Vocabulary
- Reading fluency
- Comprehension

A child needs to learn all these skills to become a proficient reader. If your child has a problem with any of these skills, your child will likely struggle to understand what he or she is reading.

Children's reading difficulties come in various forms. It depends on which skill your child has difficulty with.

Reading difficulties may affect your child's academic progress in school, and in turn, lead to low self-esteem, school refusal and other behavioural problems.



What causes reading difficulty?

There are some factors that can contribute to reading difficulty:

- Specific learning disorders (SLDs) such as dyslexia can affect reading, spelling and writing
- Lack of appropriate literacy experiences at home
- Language impairment
- Sensory impairment
- Auditory processing weaknesses
- Visual processing weaknesses
- Attention difficulties



What are the common symptoms of reading difficulty?

- Reluctance to engage in learning
- Distractibility and attention problems especially during learning activities
- Difficulties with acquisition of essential pre-literacy skills during preschool years
- Speech delay
- Difficulties in rhyming
- Difficulties with spelling despite practice
- Mispronouncing words
- Problems with comprehension of spoken language
- Slow vocabulary growth; often unable to find the right word
- Trouble remembering numbers
- Lack of interest in playing word games
- Difficulties following directions or routines
- Difficulties with fine motor skills required for writing

Helping children with reading difficulty

It is important to remember that all children learn differently and at different paces. Expose your child to reading at a young age and monitor your child's reading progress. Above all, make reading a fun activity for you and your child.

Here are some activities you can do with your child:

- Expose your child to a wide variety of literature such as comics, non-fiction and fiction at an early age.
- Let your child enjoy looking at pictures in the book. Early reading comprehension relies on pictorial clues.
- Take your child to the library regularly and read with your child daily.
- Talk about what you are reading. Help your child to make connections between what is happening in the story and real-life situations.
- Be aware of how your child is doing at school.

Detecting reading problems early can help your child in school as reading proficiency plays a major role in all school subjects.

Additional resources on reading difficulty

- Foundations for literacy
<https://www.ecda.gov.sg/growatbeanstalk/article/communication-language-and-literacy---5-to-6-years>
- Nurturing Early Learners – Language and Literacy
<https://www.nel.moe.edu.sg/teaching-and-learning/learning-areas/language-and-literacy>

NUH Child Development Unit

NUH Child Development Unit is part of the Khoo Teck Puat – National University Children’s Medical Institute at National University Hospital. The clinic provides multidisciplinary assessments, therapy and holistic management of children with developmental & behavioural disorders from birth to 7 years old.



For health information and resources relating to child development, visit:

<https://www.nuh.com.sg/cdu-resources>
<https://www.nuh.com.sg/cdu>

About the National University Centre for Women and Children

National University Centre for Women and Children (NUWoC) is a national university specialist centre that aims to empower women, children and their families to lead healthier lives. We provide comprehensive medical and surgical services ranging from pre-conception to child and maternal health.

NUWoC comprises the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology (O&G) and Khoo Teck Puat – National University Children’s Medical Institute (KTP-NUCMI) of National University Hospital. It focuses on the right-siting of appropriate services in the community and builds complementary services in National University Health System’s (NUHS) centres of excellence – Ng Teng Fong General Hospital and Alexandra Hospital.

Through a generous gift from the Estate of Khoo Teck Puat, KTP-NUCMI established an integrated outpatient facility with medical, diagnostic and rehabilitation services for children. We are also the only public specialist centre in Singapore that offers paediatric kidney and liver transplant programmes.

For more information about us, visit www.nuh.com.sg/NUWoC

Children’s Emergency (24-hr)

Location NUH Main Building, Zone F, Level 1
Contact +65 6772 5000

KTP-NUCMI

Location NUH Main Building, Zone E, Level 2
(Accessible via Kent Ridge Wing, Zone C, Level 2, Lift Lobby C)
Operating Hours 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri), 8.30am – 12.30pm (Sat)
General Enquiry +65 6772 5736
Appointment Line +65 6908 2222
Email ktpnucmi_appt@nuhs.edu.sg

9a Viva-University Children’s Cancer Centre

Location NUH Medical Centre, Zone B, Level 9
Operating Hours 8am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)
Appointment Line +65 6772 5030
Email cbccappt@nuhs.edu.sg

NUH Children’s Urgent Care Clinic @ Bukit Panjang

Location Junction 10, #01-22
Operating Hours 9am – 11pm daily (including public holidays)
General Enquiry +65 6219 1538
Email childreucc@nuhs.edu.sg

NUH Child Development Unit @ JMC

Location Jurong Medical Centre, Level 2
Operating Hours 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)
Appointment Line +65 6665 2530 / 2531
Email cdu@nuhs.edu.sg

NUH Child Development Unit @ Keat Hong

Location Keat Hong Community Club, #03-01
Operating Hours 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)
Appointment Line +65 6769 4537/4637
Email cdu@nuhs.edu.sg

Clinic A22 NUWoC Children’s Clinic @ NTFGH

Location Ng Teng Fong General Hospital
Tower A – NTFGH Clinics, Level 2
Operating Hours 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)
Appointment Line +65 6908 2222
Email appointment@nuhs.edu.sg

Our Patient Care Institutions

National University Hospital
Ng Teng Fong General Hospital &
Jurong Community Hospital
Alexandra Hospital
National University Polyclinics
Jurong Medical Centre
National University Cancer Institute, Singapore
National University Heart Centre, Singapore
National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore
NUHS Diagnostics
NUHS Pharmacy



Scan the QR code for more information on our patient care institutions.



Scan QR code for more information on NUWoC facilities.

OneNUHS Hotline: (65) 6908 2222
OneNUHS General Enquiries: contactus@nuhs.edu.sg
OneNUHS Appointments: appointment@nuhs.edu.sg
www.nuhs.edu.sg

Take charge of your health and access health information and services across NUHS institutions.

Download the NUHS App now!



Scan to download

The information in this brochure is meant for educational purposes and should not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Please seek your doctor's advice before starting any treatment, or if you have any questions related to your health, physical fitness or medical condition.

©2024, National University Hospital. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or shared without prior permission from National University Hospital.

Information is correct at time of printing (Jun 2024) and subject to revision without prior notice.