

To Promote or Retain?

Parents have to make tough decisions. If you have a child with a disability, the end of the school year may bring another tough decision. If your child isn't learning, should you hold the child back?

Many schools offer two "solutions" to children's learning problems: retention and referral to special education. All too often, schools fail to offer the critical third "R" - remediation. Struggling readers need *intensive interventions and change in instruction*.

"Retention is typically the last resort to give struggling students more time to improve their skills. When a student is identified as a struggling reader and therefore at risk for retention, parents must be notified immediately. Retention without intervention is a recipe for failure." - from the Learning Disabilities Association of America, [Best Practices for Third Grade Reading Policies](#)

Third Grade Reading Laws Infographic.

National Center for Learning Disabilities & LDA Learning Disabilities Association of America

Go to NCLD.org & ldaamerica.org to learn more.

Third-Grade Reading Laws

Over the past dozen years, more than 30 states have passed third-grade reading laws. These laws apply to students who are performing at the lowest level on third-grade reading assessments. Here's how these laws impact the success of students with learning and attention issues.

What are Third-Grade Reading Laws?

Many states have laws that set standards for how well third-grade students must be performing in reading to move on to fourth grade. Most of these laws provide for frequent monitoring and intensive interventions to help students meet those standards. The laws are one way states are trying to

What is "Retention"?

Retention is the practice of having a student repeat a grade. Retention is typically a last resort intended to give struggling students more time to improve their skills. Some schools have used retention—without providing interventions—assuming that time alone will make a difference. However, comprehensive and

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What are the FACTS about retention?

Does retention help? Does an extra year allow children to catch up?

In March 1998, the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD) issued their position paper on grade retention. Here are some excerpts from this position paper, "To Promote or to Retain."

"Flunking is an expensive fad that wastes taxpayer monies."

"Grade retention costs as much as \$13,000 per child per year." Retained children DO NOT catch up. "Retained children fall further behind and are at greater risk for dropping out of school."

"The weight of the evidence of literally hundreds of studies shows that retaining children does not produce higher achievement."

"Rather than flunking students, schools should provide high quality instruction for children who find learning difficult," says Sylvia Richardson, MD, Chair of the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities.

"Flunking penalizes children for the failure of school systems to develop effective instructional plans for children who need more and better instruction if they are to succeed. More of the same just does not work," Dr. Richardson explained.

Are you trying to decide how to help a struggling child? What are the alternatives?

Studies show that intensive tutoring by a qualified teacher is an effective strategy for these children. **Intensive tutoring works.**

"Children who find learning difficult benefit more from high quality instruction.

" Providing a daily period of intensive tutoring by qualified personnel could cost half as much as retention - and intensive tutoring reliably enhances achievement."

"Retaining children does nothing to address the problems that make learning difficult for children."

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