

The background of the slide features a collection of colorful wooden letters in various colors including yellow, teal, purple, blue, and green, scattered around the central white text box. The letters are of different shapes and sizes, some appearing to be part of a larger set of alphabet blocks.

The ABCs of Reading Instruction in NYC

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Today's Training







- Introduction
- How children learn to read & why some struggle to do so
- What's changing in NYC Public Schools this year
- How to get help if your child is struggling with reading
- Programs & supports for students with disabilities in NYC schools
- Tips for parent-teacher conferences

What is Advocates for Children?

AFC is an independent agency that protects the rights of all NYC students

OUR SERVICES:

-  Helpline: 1-866-427-6033 (Mon–Thurs, 10am–4pm)
-  Guides and resources: www.advocatesforchildren.org
-  Workshops and trainings
-  Free legal services to low-income families

How children learn to read & why some struggle to do so

All children CAN become proficient readers!

- Learning to read is NOT a natural or automatic process
- There is a mountain of scientific evidence about how best to teach kids how to read
- The type of instruction that works for students with dyslexia benefits all kids

Reading is...

WORD RECOGNITION (DECODING)

getting the words off the page (requires mastering the relationships between sounds and letters)



LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

understanding what the words mean (requires vocabulary and content knowledge)

The “five pillars” of effective reading instruction

Phonemic awareness

Phonics

Fluency

Vocabulary

Comprehension

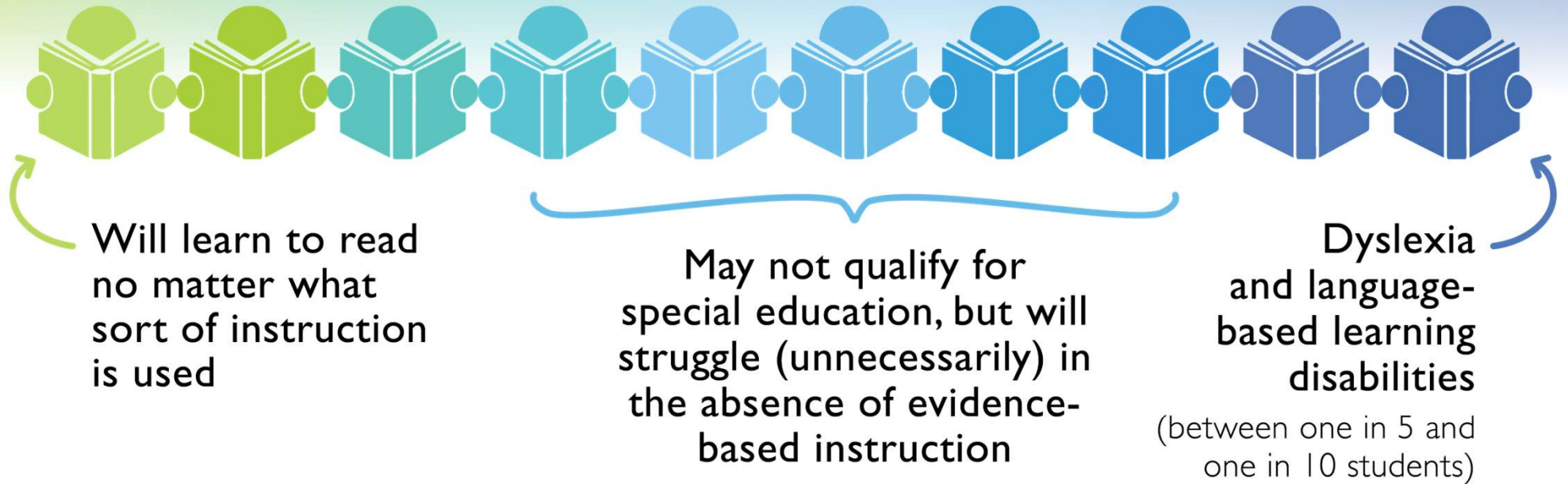
STRUCTURED LITERACY

- ✓ explicit and systematic phonics: all letter-sound relationships are directly taught and instruction follows a planned sequence
- ✓ encourages students to “sound it out” when a word is unfamiliar
- ✓ good for everyone, bad for no one, *essential* for students with dyslexia

BALANCED LITERACY

- ✗ some phonics instruction is thrown in, but it’s not done systematically
- ✗ encourages guessing at unfamiliar words based on the context, the pictures, or the first letter
- ✗ kids who learn to read do so *in spite of* these practices, not *because* of them

A continuum of reading difficulties



Understanding dyslexia

- Difficulty with accurate and fluent word recognition
- Is neurobiological — a brain-based condition
- **NOT** a temporary delay in development or something a child outgrows
- Has **NOTHING** to do with intelligence!

Students with dyslexia might...

- Struggle to learn nursery rhymes or tell if two words rhyme
- Have a lot of trouble learning the names and sounds of letters
- Read aloud slowly and awkwardly, with lots of stopping and starting and mispronunciations
- Frequently skip over words when reading or make wild guesses at words based on just the first letter
- Become frustrated or upset when asked to read or go to great lengths to avoid reading at all

What's changing in NYC Public Schools this year

NYC Reads: Curriculum

Each district has to pick one of three curricula to use in grades K–5 in all its elementary schools:

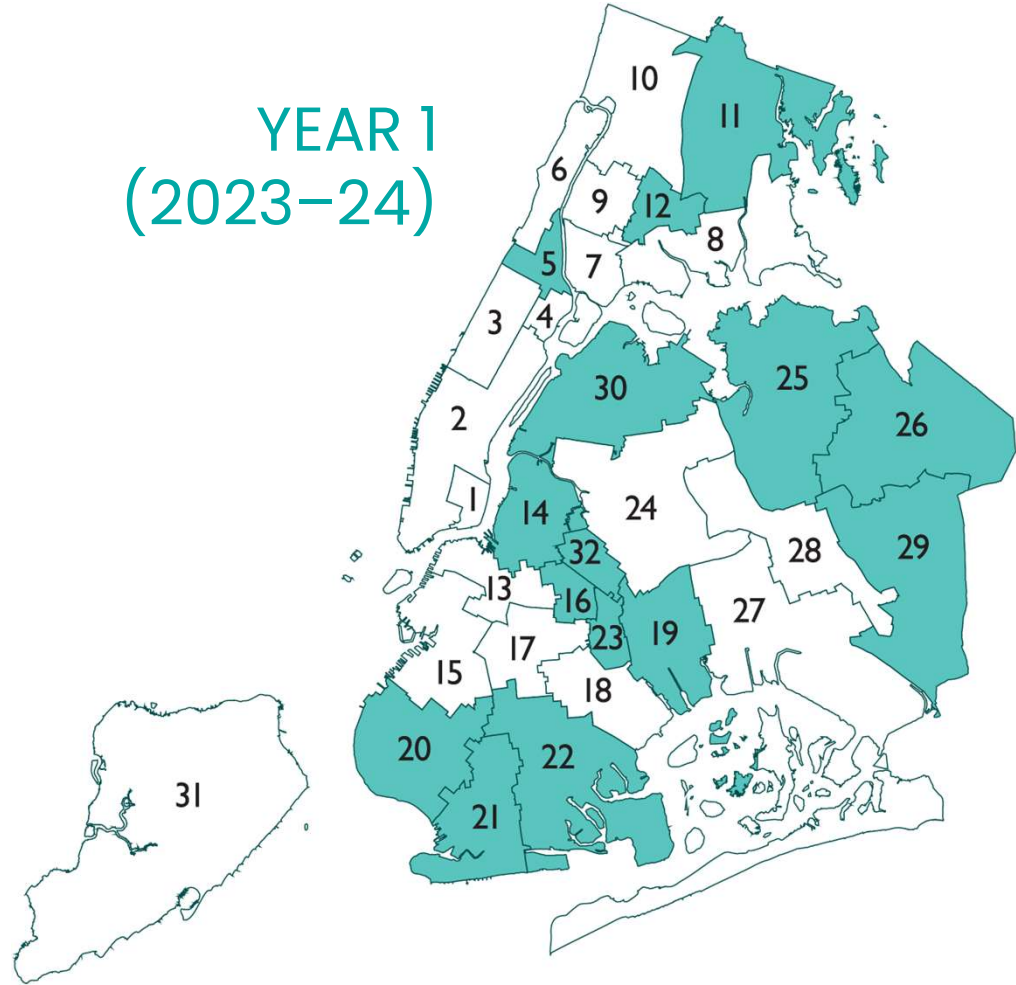
- HMH Into Reading
- EL Education
- Wit & Wisdom

NYC Reads: Curriculum

For foundational skills instruction in grades K–2, schools have to use:

- Wilson Foundations
- Really Great Reading
- Heggerty Phonemic Awareness

YEAR 1
(2023–24)



NYC Reads: Screening & assessment



NYC Reads: Intensive intervention & more



Intensive Reading
Interventionists



Special Education
Intervention Teachers

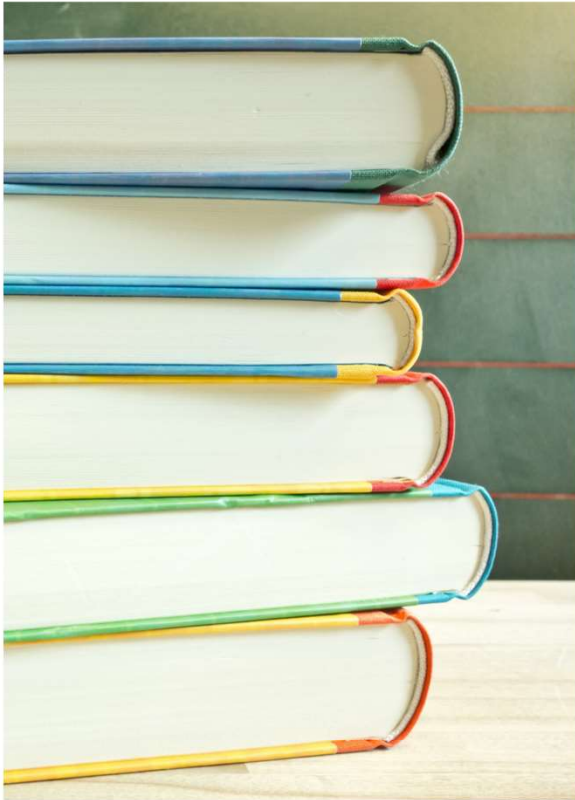


South Bronx
Literacy Academy



Structured literacy
pilot programs

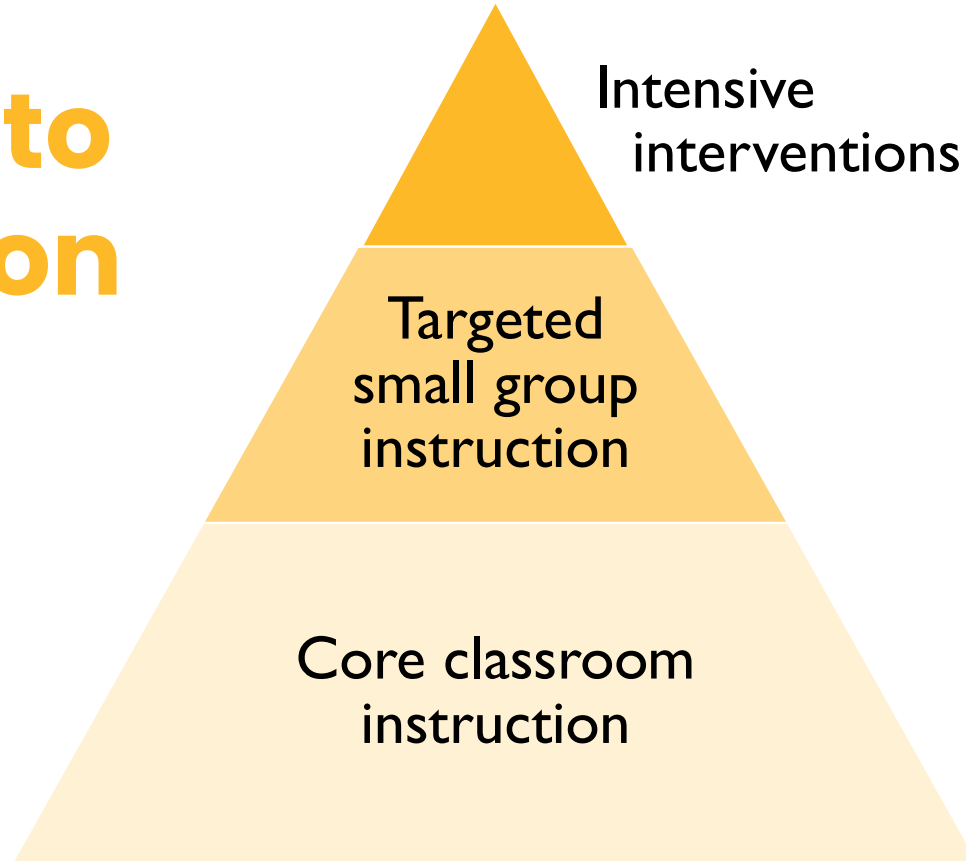
How to get help if your child is struggling with reading



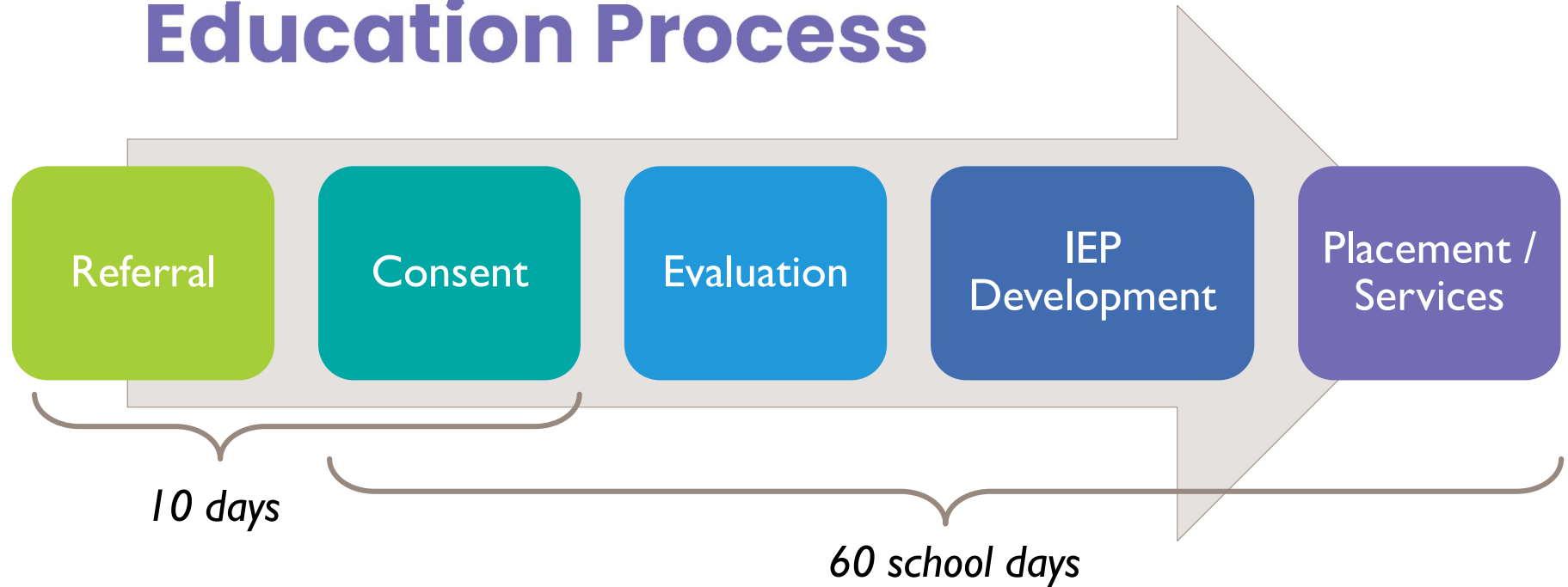
Academic Intervention Services (AIS)

- Student support services
- Offered *in addition to* general education instruction
- To help students meet learning standards

Response to Intervention (RTI)



The Special Education Process



Referral



Parents/legal guardians and schools can refer a student for special education



If possible, **do it in writing** – keep a copy and send to your principal, school-based support team and/or your committee on special education

Consent

- Within 10 school days of referral, the school must ask for your consent to evaluate your child
- Your consent must be written, voluntary, and informed
- You can withdraw consent at any time
- Once given, the clock starts ticking for the DOE and they have 60 school days to finish the process and put services or placement (or new services and placement) in place



Evaluations

- Must be bilingual, if the student uses a language other than English
- Free
- School *must* evaluate every three years, but up to once a year
- Parents have a right to copies

Developing the IEP

Next, the school will hold an IEP meeting to develop (or modify) an Individualized Education Program (IEP)

IEPs are

- Individualized
- Legally binding document
- Good for one year

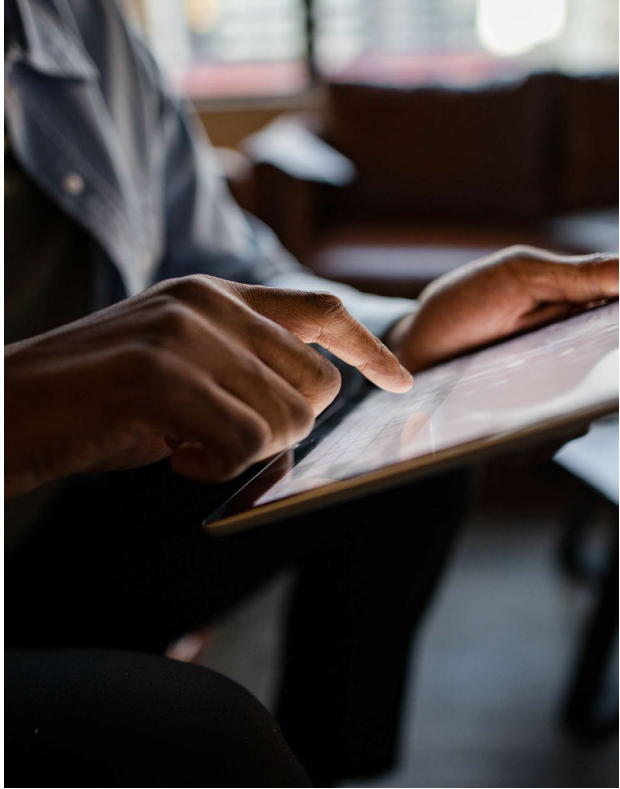
At the meeting

Parents, special ed & general ed teachers, school psychologist, district rep, others as appropriate.

Programs & supports for students with disabilities in NYC schools

Dyslexia & specific methodology on the IEP

- The State Department of Education encourages IEP teams to include language about dyslexia and other learning disabilities on IEPs when appropriate
- It is sometimes appropriate to identify specific methodology for an individual student. Where that's the case, school staff who deliver that instruction must be properly trained to do so



Assistive Technology (AT)

- AT is any device, or support for using that device, that helps an individual student with a disability learn
- Provides alternative ways of accessing material
- Does not teach new material

Accessible Educational Materials (AEM)

- Accessible Educational Materials are designed to be used by a variety of students in a variety of formats.
- Materials are made available to students in print, digital, and graphic formats, by audio, video, or visual presentation.

Braille



Large Print



Audio



Digital Text



Accommodations & Modifications

Some students need accommodations or modifications to participate in the general curriculum.

ACCOMMODATIONS

change the way the students approach the curriculum.

MODIFICATIONS

change the material actually presented.

Intensive Reading Education and Development (I READ) Early Literacy Program

- Specialized NYC Public Schools program for students with IEPs in kindergarten & first grade
- Apply when your child is in pre-K or K
- Reduced class size ICT model
- Only in 8 schools (one or two in each borough)





What if you disagree with the DOE?

- Informal dispute resolution
- Formal due process

Tips for parent-teacher conferences



Questions to ask

- What should my child be able to do by the end of this year with respect to reading?
- Are they on track to do that?
- How are you monitoring my child's progress throughout the year?
- Is my child receiving any extra help or interventions, beyond what everyone in the class gets?

IF YES What program are you using?

IF NO What interventions are available at this school?

HELPFUL LINKS



A (non-exhaustive) list of literacy supports by school in 2023-24 | <https://bit.ly/literacy2324>



www.schools.nyc.gov/nycreads



Reading Rockets | www.readingrockets.org



AFC'S HELPLINE

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Monday – Thursday, 10am – 4pm
info@advocatesforchildren.org

