

Halifax Learning™

Results you can read.™

Come
READ
with us!



EASY READING STARTS HERE!

About Us



We are educators, trainers, speech and language pathologists, researchers and coaches that have years of experience in science of reading programming, structured literacy, teacher support and understanding learning challenges and differences and best practices in all.

Locally Grown

Halifax Learning uses SpellRead, a program developed by Dr. Kay MacPhee in PEI. Our Founder, Sarah Arnold worked to bring SpellRead to Nova Scotia in 1997 with the Halifax Learning Centre

Evidence Based

Halifax Learning's delivery of SpellRead aligns with expert opinions in reading research. We're not tutors – find out why.

Research Driven

We are continuously participating in research to develop and maximize our program for rockstar readers.

Halifax Learning acknowledges that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) people first signed with the British Crown in 1725. The treaties did not deal with the surrender of lands and resources but, in fact, recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations. Halifax Learning sits on the Traditional Territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all Treaty people.



Halifax Learning is the pillar of science-based literacy, instruction, and training. We empower all learners with life-changing skills so they can chart their course and participate fully in life.

Our team has helped thousands of struggling readers develop excellent reading skills since 1997! Halifax Learning is trusted by students, parents, educators and medical professionals for its excellent, gold-standard results.

Halifax Learning believes that all students have the right to evidence-driven, structured literacy programs. We believe that all students should be able to access programs at their school. As we work toward continued teacher training we continue to offer our programs at our clinics in Halifax, Bedford and Dartmouth and across North America through our virtual programming. In addition to our clinics, we are proud to partner with:

- ✓ Cole Harbour Foundation
- ✓ Bridgeway Academy
- ✓ Halifax Independent School
- ✓ HRM's Youth Advocate Program
- ✓ Nova Scotia Department of Education - African Canadian Services
- ✓ Durham District School Board - Indigenous Services

We are excited to present our new research initiative outcomes nationally and internationally at educational conferences. We continue to engage with parent advocacy groups to ensure all youth have access.



The Science of Reading

Learning to read is a complex process.

The good news is that research has identified five core components to develop efficient reading skills:

1. Phonological Awareness
2. Phonics
3. Vocabulary Development
4. Reading Fluency
5. Reading Comprehension

Halifax Learning's delivery of SpellRead is designed with these five essential skills in mind and is delivered explicitly and systematically, ensuring that skills are brought to the point at or above grade level within one year. If a

student isn't meeting measurable targets at developmental stages, there are excellent evidence-driven remediation programs for successful intervention. We believe all students can learn to read well when these programs are followed.

Remember:

- Reading skills do not develop in a short time.
- Deciphering the alphabetic code often requires explicit systematic instruction.
- Developing readers need multiple, repetitive opportunities to master skills.
- Reading programs must incorporate all five of the core components to ensure skilled, confident reading.

We've turned
thousands of
struggling readers
into reading
rockstars!



5

Understanding the Essential Skills of Reading Development

/c/ /_a_/ /t/

c a t

/b/ /_a_/ /t/

b a t

1. Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness provides a foundation for all other skill development. Phonemes are the smallest units of sound that make up spoken language and are the building blocks of syllables, and thus words. For example: the word “cat” has three phonemes
/c/ /_a_/ /t/

Children with strong phonological awareness can easily manipulate the smallest units of the English language to identify and manipulate words, syllables, as well as identify onsets, rimes, and rhymes.

Within the broad skill of phonological awareness falls phonemic awareness, which requires the ability to identify, blend, break apart, and substitute all 44 phonemes in the English language.

Halifax Learning’s delivery of SpellRead ensures mastery and automaticity in phonemic awareness by teaching the 44 phonemes of the English language

in an explicit, systematic manner. Students are provided with instruction that is simple, clear and repetitive in a rapid, engaging manner.

2. Phonics

Developing readers learn to match a unit of sound (phonemes) to a letter or letters that make the sound (graphemes). Readers use phonics to decode unfamiliar language. The word “bat” contains three sounds:

/b/ /a/ /t/

Those sounds look like this: **b a t**

The program does this by putting phonics instruction at the core of its outcomes over three phases. In Phase A, students are introduced to the most simple phonemes and graphemes in the English language and practice those skills at the one syllable level. In Phases B and C, the skills become more complex and expand from one syllable to multisyllabic, real-word vocabulary. We assess progress through our evidence-driven speed reading tool that ensures automaticity.

3. Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary development is the process by which people learn new words, word meanings and the pronunciation of words. This skill is continuously developing, beginning with babbling in infants, progressing into meaningful speech, and continuing to develop at varying rates over the course of an individual's lifetime. Halifax Learning works to increase a student's vocabulary both implicitly and explicitly.

4. Reading Fluency

Reading fluency is the ability to read words accurately, quickly and with appropriate expression. Students who read inefficiently typically rely on

compensatory strategies such as memorization, context, and inference which can interrupt flow of thought and impede reading comprehension.

5. Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand and interpret a text. To be able to accurately understand written material, children need to be able to interpret what they read, make connections between what they read and what they already know and to give thought to what they have read.

Our assessment measures all five essential skills



What Sets Us Apart?

At Halifax Learning, we focus on developing a student's phonological automaticity through implicit instruction. Using a multisensory approach, students achieve phonemic and phonetic skills mastery. They learn to automatically recognize, process and manipulate any combination of the 44 sounds of the English language. Your child will develop excellent, sustainable reading skills within one year.

We continue to achieve successful results with students of various learning profiles including students:

- who are multiple grade levels behind;
- who have been diagnosed with a learning disability;
- who are transitioning from English to French or French to English;
- who are transitioning to Primary, Post- Secondary, or Employment Opportunities;
- who might be diagnosed with ADD, ADHD, ODD, ASD, etc.;
- or
- who are learning English as an additional language.

Without automaticity students rely on compensatory strategies such as guessing, memorization, and inference which interferes with fluency and comprehension.

Your child will develop excellent, sustainable reading skills within one year.



The Instructional Cycle

Each class is broken down into three components:

1. Linguistic Foundations
2. Active Reading
3. Writing Connections

Following this instructional cycle builds confidence and familiarity. SpellRead's design successfully builds on the student's prior knowledge and creates a solid foundation by mastering skills from the most simple to complex concepts.

What are Linguistic Foundations?

Linguistic Foundation activities achieve phonological automaticity with scaffolded phonics and phonemic awareness tasks that ensure engagement by taking a multi-sensory approach, rapid transition and simple instruction.

Here are some examples of activities:

Building: Using sounds to build a combination of different syllables.

Spelling: Using sounds to spell syllables that were just built.

Blending: Blending a single consonant sound together with vowel sounds.

Card packs: Reading card packs and syllable charts.

How is Active Reading Done?

What is involved in writing connections?

The writing component of the program is extremely important. Students write each class in response to their in-class reading. It forces the student to not only bring to memory what they have read, but also helps them to use their sound system, access their language base and record their thoughts.

At home we ask that parents let their child write freely and practice self-editing. Students begin to take great pride in their writing journals, making homework and practice particularly easy!

Our instructors always review students' writing journals and provide meaningful and constructive feedback.

The student writing journal serves as a portfolio for student progress. Parents will observe progression from month to month. This tangible evidence is a true testament to your child's new skillset!

What to Expect

When you enroll with us you can expect:

- Small instructional groups based on age, grade and skillset
- Clear and concise explanations
- Explicit instructional sequences
- More opportunities for immediate feedback and error correction
- More skillful orchestration and integration of elements
- Regular assessment and evaluation with reports and parent consultation.



Poor literacy skills are at the root of many issues. Let's change this. Train teachers and change the world.

The most important resource in the world is our children. All students deserve the right to learn how to read well. Halifax Learning provides a proprietary training in our Science of Reading with a focus on delivering and implementing SpellRead in the classroom. The program is taught by general or special education

teachers, reading specialists, psychologists, speech-language pathologists, and paraprofessionals. SpellRead literacy instructors demonstrate strong phonological abilities themselves and participate in 25 hours of live training, as well as a small amount of online training, and receive ongoing expert support throughout the year. In order to ensure effective implementation of the program, sufficient time, fidelity to the instructional design, regular monitoring of student progress, and adequate teacher training

and support must be present. Rigorous supports are available to schools as needed.

Sufficient Intervention Time.

It is vital that the full program of SpellRead instruction be implemented on a regular basis. The intensive, systematic, and focused instruction required by the full SpellRead design must be provided consistently, and for a sufficient duration, so that all students move through all phases of the program.



Fidelity to the Instructional Design. Our students groups should contain no more than five students, grouped according to word-level reading ability as discerned through diagnostic test results. Each class should include all three components: Linguistic Foundations, Active Reading, and Writing Connections.

Regular Monitoring of Student Progress. Instructors report specific formative assessment data each week, ensuring that students are mastering the intended sequence of skills. These data are used to guide ongoing instruction.

Sufficient Teacher Training and Support. Instructors possess strong, efficient auditory- processing, phonological, reading, and writing skills. Training, materials, and support

should ensure that every teacher understands our structured reading program methodology and rationale and is equipped to deliver the highest quality of instruction to students. Building-level knowledge of the program by, and support from, principals, classroom teachers, parents, and support staff are also necessary to guarantee the program's success.

Online Learning

Online learning is an option for students who cannot attend in person due to distance or scheduling for the past few years. We continue to offer online classes through secure Zoom sessions to students from Halifax, across Canada and worldwide. Students receive the same goldstandard classes and instruction remotely with other students of like age and skills.



Our Team

At Halifax Learning we take great care in recruiting Reading Practitioners that share in our mission to eradicate illiteracy through evidence-based programs. We are not tutors. Our Reading Practitioners undergo extensive training in the science of reading and in Halifax Learning's delivery of the SpellRead program. They receive ongoing professional development and support, regular feedback and coaching.





Need a second opinion? Ask a parent! What Are Parents And Students Saying?

“The instruction Mason received was exactly what we had hoped for... This partnership between Halifax Learning and home was the key to Mason’s success. Through open lines of communication, we were always aware of what his goals were, his progress to date and what the next phase of his learning would entail.”

– Mason’s proud parent

“Since our son started SpellRead, we have seen a significant improvement in both his reading fluency and his confidence. His teacher is also noticing significant improvement and noted "Brandon met instructional level for end of grade level benchmarks! His phrasing is much better, his comprehension has improved." He is enjoying reading now and asks to read every night! Thanks Halifax Learning for supporting our child and helping to positively impact his progress and confidence in reading!

– Parent of graduate

“I am a mother of three boys and a Clinical Psychologist specializing in psychoeducational assessments and learning difficulties. I first realized that my youngest son was struggling with learning some of the foundation level reading skills when he was about 4 years old. He was having a harder time than would be expected learning the alphabet, rhyming, and hearing sounds that were in words. I did a little bit of extra reading work at home with my son during his Primary year... I chose SpellRead because it is an empirically based program, and the program I was most familiar and comfortable with for my son. My son’s instructor managed to get my son to grade level (if not slightly beyond) during the school year. He is now at grade level. I am very grateful for SpellRead and what it has done for our family.

– Parent

“SpellRead helped me with writing, reading and spelling. At first I did not want to go but then when I met Lorrie I started loving to go but then one day Lorrie said I would have a different teacher and I got so mad at this that I did not to go like before. Then I met Kim and she was as nice as Lorrie. Also at SpellRead I would talk about things and how my day was. SpellRead is awesome and the teachers are even better. I learned so much while having fun and talking. I love SpellRead.

– Logan, graduate



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For more information
about our program or to
book your free
reading assessment

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Halifax | Bedford | Dartmouth | Online
www.halifaxlearning.com | 902.453.4113 | information@halifaxlearning.com