

# THE RELUCTANT READER

## Reading Problem or Just Bored?

The ranks of the reluctant readers are swelling, especially among boys. "Reluctant readers" fall into two categories: children who have difficulty reading and children who don't read because they see no reason to. They don't think reading is cool, or don't like the material they are offered, or prefer technology or more action-oriented activities. Here are some early warning signs of reluctant readers, aged 8, with a possible reading problem, courtesy of Paul Kropp\* in *How to Make Your Child a Reader for Life*:



- Is your child unable to focus or listen to a story for more than a few minutes?
- Is he unwilling to read aloud, even on a one to one basis?
- Does he ask for assistance for decoding easy words?
- Does he guess wildly at difficult words, or skip over them?
- When reading, does he fail to correct misread words that create nonsense?
- When reading out loud, does his voice seem flat and disconnected from reading?
- Does he tend to move his lips while reading silently?

For boys who are not motivated to read, Kropp says it's important to offer them what they like. Non-fiction for one. And as for fiction, Kropp suggests keeping his **BEAR** rule in mind. \*\*

- Ⓑ Boys or young men as the main character
- Ⓔ Episodic plot structure
- Ⓐ Action as opposed to emotion
- Ⓡ Rebellious attitude, in conflict with parents or society

*Further readings:*

**Me Read? No Way! A Practical Guide to Improving Boys' Literacy Skills**, published by the Ontario Ministry of Education.  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/brochure/meread/meread.pdf>

\*Paul Kropp is the author of numerous "high interest" books for struggling young readers.

\*\*Canadian Children's Book News, Spring 2004

