

Epilepsy and Reading: A Creative and Unique Approach to Teaching Literacy to your Child with Epilepsy [Edit text](#)

Chicago Reading Services is our new endeavor to relieve the severe lack of literacy support specific to a child's unique needs. At Holman Therapy, we specialize in providing speech and language therapy to children with epilepsy, and we are particularly affected by the unique challenges that children with epilepsy experience. While there are clear skill sets and areas of need that many children with epilepsy share, over the years we have truly come to appreciate the individuality of children who have seizures. Seizures vary in type, location, duration, and frequency requiring a unique plan, drug cocktail, and sometimes diet to "tame the beast" (the seizures). Unfortunately, not only the seizures but also the treatment plan, necessary for controlling these seizures, frequently comes with it's own side-effects and challenges. Ultimately, no child with epilepsy is the same. In addition to the great truth that all children are individuals with their own essence and skill sets that their epilepsy will not change, the variety of types of seizures and chemical changes due to medication and diet truly make each struggle with epilepsy unique. This can sometimes be a source of frustration for parents, who are networking and advocating for their child, wondering why other children with epilepsy may not be experiencing the particular struggle that their child is. While the variation of presentations may certainly be isolating, at Holman Therapy we view this variety as an indication that there are no clear-cut barriers to a child with epilepsy's learning potential. [Edit text](#)

We emphasize this individuality-- perhaps to the point of exhaustion!-- because the common challenges that a number of children with epilepsy experience tend to dominate the conversation. Difficulties with motor planning, attention, body awareness, sensory regulation, executive organizational functioning, social-pragmatic skills, multi-tasking, completion of tasks, receptive and expressive language, viso-spatial awareness, and even low body tone are all real challenges that some children with epilepsy experience. An ideal literacy program for a child with epilepsy is one in which the instructor has extensive experience tailoring instruction for children with these specific difficulties, without presupposing that these challenges apply to all. The most effective approach for literacy, and ultimately any therapeutic intervention, must be flexible to be able capitalize on each child's specific needs and skill sets. [Edit text](#)

There is a significant need for stronger and more current research in the field of reading instruction and epilepsy. Below, please find the links to most current research: [Edit text](#)

[Language in benign childhood epilepsy with centro-temporal spikes abbreviated form: Rolandic epilepsy and language, Journal: Brain and Language, March 2005](#) [Edit link](#)

Reading Skills of Children with Generalised or Focal Epilepsy Attending Ordinary School, J. Hart, Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology, 2008 [Edit link](#)

Reading impairment in the neuronal migration disorder of periventricular nodular heterotopia, Chang, B.S., et al., American Academy of Neurology, 2005. [Edit link](#)

Reading abilities and cognitive functions of children with epilepsy: Influence of epileptic syndrome, Chaix, Brain and Development, 2006. [Edit link](#)

Neuropsychological Aspects of Learning Disabilities in Epilepsy A. P. Aldenkamp*, W. C. J. Alpherts, M. J. A. Dekker, J. Overweg Article first published online: 5 NOV 2007 Epilepsia [Edit link](#)

Attentional Ability in Children with Epilepsy, Sánchez-Carpintero¹, R. and Brian G. R., Epilepsia, 2003. [Edit link](#)

Lateralization of Temporal Lobe Epilepsy and Learning Disabilities, as Defined by Disability-related Civil Rights Law, Butterbaugh et al., Epilepsia, 2004. [Edit link](#)

Language Dysfunction in Children with Rolandic Epilepsy, Staden, U. et. al, Thieme, 2008